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Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 5 June 2002

Mercredi 5 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 juin 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ALEX McCUALEY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): After 33 years of policing, our Sudbury police chief, Alex McCauley, is retiring. Alex started his career in Copper Cliff in 1969 and joined our regional force in 1973.

Alex is a cop's cop. He learned his profession by living his profession. He worked in the uniform division, the criminal intelligence division, the traffic division and the criminal investigations division. He learned his trade well. He became chief of the Sudbury Regional Police Service in 1994.

Chief McCauley does not shy away from tough stances. He seriously questions public safety issues that aren't in the best interests of the community he loves so dearly. For example, he's not afraid to say he's opposed to the quota system instituted by the Correctional Service of Canada. He's a strong supporter of the JOEMAC committee, which is trying to get Constable Joe MacDonald's killers back in maximum-security facilities.

Alex has immersed himself in our community over the years. He's the past chair of the Northern Cancer Research Foundation, a member of the board of directors of Cambrian College and of the Sudbury Food Bank, and is honorary chair of the Countdown for Kids campaign in Sudbury.

At a retirement party we're going to have for him on Saturday, my community of Sudbury will be expressing its thanks to Chief McCauley for all his dedicated service. The people I represent want to wish Alex and his wife, Piirko, well, and good health in their retirement. May his new challenges be marked with success as he continues in his quest to serve the people of his community.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION PUBLIC SPEAKING CONTEST

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I rise today to acknowledge the hard work and achievement of two young fellows on garnering provincial honours at the Royal Canadian Legion poster, literary and public speaking contests. These two boys, 10-year-

old Adrian D'Alimonte and grade 8 student Reid Karges, may be small in stature and young in age, but they're on their way to becoming literary giants.

Adrian D'Alimonte's poem, reflecting on the importance of Remembrance Day and acknowledging the sacrifices made by Canadian soldiers, captured the imagination of judges at local, regional and provincial levels. D'Alimonte placed first in three successive divisional contests before taking home top honours at the province-wide competition. The Seneca Central student says he thought of his great-grandfather, a former soldier, as he spent a week composing and editing his first-place poem.

As I mentioned, our area was lucky to have not one but two provincial winners. Reid Karges of Walsh public school spoke on the complications and peculiarities of the English language, something we can all attest to here in the Legislature.

The road to victory is often a long and arduous one. The trail to the province-wide speaking championships was no different for Karges. He began his march to victory in December. By practising his material he was successful, and by early January he achieved his goal.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): The low priority with which the Ontario government treats the provision of mental health services to children across this province is truly appalling. Last month, the Lakehead Regional Family Centre in Thunder Bay called an emergency media conference to announce that for the first time ever they were forced to post a deficit in their annual budget.

After years of provincial underfunding, coupled with an increased caseload of 150% since 1995, as well as a continual struggle to recruit staff at salaries far below those which are available in other health care institutions, the LRFC had no more rabbits to pull out of their hat.

The ministry's response to this call for help was stunningly bureaucratic and of absolutely no comfort to the desperate children and families in dire need of immediate help. Rather than provide the clearly justified funds to at least eliminate the deficit, the ministry said they would instead put the agency through a time-consuming program review, a program review which would only confirm the clear need for additional funds, a review that will only confirm that there are now 260 families on

the waiting list for help—help that may not be available for six months.

Minister Elliott, this cold-hearted, bureaucratic approach is nothing less than the sanctioned abandonment of children and families in desperate need of help. Why do you believe that mental health services for children are any less important than their other health care needs? I am incensed at the casual manner with which children's mental health is regarded by this government. Minister, you must do the right thing. You must provide the funding now to help the Lakehead Regional Family Centre do the important work they so very much want to do.

CAMBRIDGE WORLD SENIOR WOMEN'S CURLING TEAM

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): More good news from Cambridge. I rise to acknowledge and applaud five noteworthy Cambridge women: Anne Dunn, skip; Lindy Marchuk, vice; Gloria Campbell, second; Carol Thompson, lead; and Fran Todd, alternate; who with excellence, pride and skill successfully represented Cambridge and Canada at the world senior women's curling championship held in Bismarck, North Dakota, on April 15, 2002. Mr Joe Todd of Cambridge coached this world-class team. This team is champion of the world.

Anne, Lindy, Gloria, Carol and Fran are also two-time Canada champions, winning this prestigious title this year and last. The team calls the 96-year-old Galt Country Club its home, and on May 26, I, along with club members and many other Cambridge residents, had the opportunity of recognizing their excellence and accomplishments. Many Cambridge athletes represent Canada around the world and we are honoured that so many leave and return as the best.

On behalf of the province of Ontario, I offer sincere congratulations to the team, as well as the Galt Country Club that has produced so many fine curlers. May I extend my best wishes to the team in their future endeavours.

ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURIES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Timothy Shaver is 25 years old. Eight years ago, when he was 15, he sustained a traumatic brain injury as a result of a skiing accident. Timothy was sent to Texas for rehabilitation before being repatriated to a group home in the Niagara region. Unfortunately, because Timothy's injury has left him explosive and potentially violent, he needs more care than can be provided in a group home setting. He was moved home to Thunder Bay, but without the support that the Brain Injured Services of Northern Ontario required to meet his needs.

Last year, Timothy started a fire in his apartment in an attempt to commit suicide. He was put in jail because a psychiatric hospital was not equipped to deal with a

brain-injured individual. Last fall, as he was about to be released on to the street, the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital agreed to take Timothy on what was to be a temporary basis until a suitable placement could be found. That was seven months ago.

There is, in fact, a suitable placement available, through Dale Brain Injury Services in London, for Timothy and for two other individuals with severe brain injuries. But the Ministry of Health says the cost of care for these severely disabled individuals is too high. And it is high: it is \$300,000 per year, exactly the same amount that the Minister of Health was prepared to pay as an annual salary to his spin doctor. Surely it's more important to provide safe care for Timothy and for other severely disabled individuals than to pay for a public relations person.

While the ministry balks at costs, Timothy Shaver is about to be discharged again, once again likely to be put on to the streets. What will it cost to jail Timothy again, I wonder. What price will someone pay should Timothy become violent? What value do we put on Timothy Shaver's life?

OPSEU HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): It takes a team to keep Ontario healthy. That's the theme of the campaign now underway by 10,000 OPSEU hospital professionals, to convince the Conservative government of the need to financially support a decent contract for these workers. They include X-ray and medical laboratory technologists, respiratory therapists, radiation and ultrasound technologists and physio- and occupational therapists, to name but a few. They are the people who run the heart pump during heart surgeries, process the biopsy to determine if it's malignant or test a kidney to be transplanted to ensure the recipient doesn't get hepatitis.

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Ontario hospitals can't work without therapeutic, diagnostic and rehabilitative services. Professionals delivering these critical services must have their valuable contribution recognized. That means paying them decent wages to keep them in the hospital system instead of driving them out.

Without a commitment to pay allied health care professionals properly, it will be even more difficult for Ontario hospitals to recruit and retain the staff needed to provide doctors and nurses with the information they need to correctly diagnose and treat patients. A shortage of these professionals does negatively impact on health care, and we must recognize that.

Central bargaining between OPSEU and the Ontario Hospital Association has broken off, with no more bargaining dates scheduled. The Minister of Health could positively influence the situation by publicly indicating that proper funding for hospital professionals will be given to the OHA to bargain a decent contract.

We need these health care professionals to keep Ontario healthy. Let's pay them what they deserve.

CANOE THE NONQUON

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the 34th annual Canoe the Nonquon, a fundraiser on behalf of the Scugog Shores Museum. The event was held last Saturday in Port Perry.

It was in 1969 that the first Canoe the Nonquon race was held. At that time the organizers included Charles Labanovich, Charles Pavlik, Joan and John Scott, Allan Wakeford, Robert Merchant, and Bill and Claudette Brock. The funds raised that year were used to move the first building, the log cabin, to the site of the current museum on Scugog Island.

Since 1969, canoeists from across Ontario have been marking their calendars for the first Saturday in June. Indeed Canoe the Nonquon has become the largest and oldest race of its type in Ontario. In addition to the recreational and competitive canoeists, this event is sponsored by close to 100 local businesses and by the entire community.

I'd like to congratulate Lake Scugog Historical Society president Paul Arculus and race coordinator Bruce Aikins, along with the many dedicated volunteers who make Canoe the Nonquon such a great success. Just a few of the volunteers include Ralph Giannini, who made the medallions for the winning canoeists, secretary Susan Dutton, treasurer Vilma Giannini and Albert Putsey, who drove the shuttle vehicle for the participants.

This year's event attracted 250 canoeists, along with hundreds of visitors, to the exhibits at the Latcham Centre. It is estimated they raised \$6,000.

I invite all members to visit Scugog Shores Museum as well as the community of Port Perry for an enjoyable weekend.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Today I hold in my hand another most depressing statistic, due to the Conservative government's one-size-fits-all education funding formula. Therefore, today we are ringing the school bells loud and clear as a signal that we are in serious decline, especially in the elementary school system.

According to a survey conducted by People for Education, we have already lost dozens of physical education teachers, librarians, guidance teachers and music teachers, and our students are forced to share textbooks. What a shame.

The most shocking statistic is the loss of 60% of all ESL teachers in the GTA. We are home to 71% of Ontario's non-English-speaking students. English classes are the most essential tools for newcomer children, for learning the curriculum. Without English, you can't understand the teacher; you can't participate in class; you can't interact; you can't even get a part-time job.

The conclusion of all the experts is simply this: you are marginalizing these children. You are creating an underclass.

This is a wake-up call. We know you're good with a knife to cut the heart out of education, but what we need

now is a healer. We want you to heal this grievous wound. Who will it be on your side to stand up and give us back our ESL teachers? Who will it be on your side to stand up and say, "Yes, we'll give you back the money we need to have these classes back in order"?

EVENTS IN NIPISSING

Mr Al McDonald (Nipissing): It is my pleasure today to speak about my riding of Nipissing and individuals who make it a great place to live, work and raise a family.

On May 31 of this year, Dominic Repaci and Giovanni Caruso, two downtown barbers for the past 40 years, hung up their scissors for the last time. First-, second- and third-generation customers were regulars at the D&J barbershop, although both Dominic and Giovanni will tell you they were more than just customers, but friends.

They will be missed, not only by the downtown, but by the whole community. I want to wish both Dominic and Giovanni all the best in their retirement. They deserve it after serving their community so well.

The Air Base Property Corp was formed a few short years ago, headed by a community leader by the name of Vic Fedeli. This corporation was set up when the local Canadian Forces base was downsized by the federal government, and its mandate was job creation. With Mr Fedeli's hard work, dedication and vision was born a new aerospace industry in North Bay, with companies such as Voyageur Airways, Bombardier, Wood Group, Lemex Aviation and others employing more than 300 people. I'd like to personally thank Vic Fedeli and the board of ABPC, who are all volunteers, for their success in building this new industry in the north.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice and social policy and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 86, An Act to rescue children trapped in the misery of prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation and to amend the Highway Traffic Act / Projet de loi 86, Loi visant à délivrer les enfants prisonniers de la prostitution et d'autres formes d'exploitation sexuelle et modifiant le Code de la route.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOURCES

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I beg leave to present the final report of the select committee on alternative fuel sources and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Does the member wish to make brief statement?

Mr Galt: This report is an example of what we can accomplish when partisan affiliations are set aside. It is a consensus report that reflects the wishes of all three political parties in Ontario. It contains 141 recommendations, and I'm so pleased that we were able to arrive at 141 recommendations without a single vote. In fact, it's important to note that no dissenting report has been brought forward by either of the opposition parties. That's very encouraging and gratifying to me as chair of the committee.

But perhaps more importantly, the select committee report reflects the tremendous input we've had from energy stakeholders from around the country and internationally. Without their participation, we could not have explored all the renewable energy options in such a thorough manner. The result is a report that is comprehensive in its nature and far-reaching in its recommendations. I thank the Premier and the cabinet for giving us such incredible latitude in our mandate. If there's an alternative energy source out there that we haven't explored, I don't think it's been discovered yet.

As Chair of the committee I'm pleased to offer my thanks to all those who worked so diligently on this report, including Vice-Chair Dr Marie Bountrogianni, Jim Bradley, Marilyn Churley, Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings, John O'Toole, Jerry Ouellette and Ernie Parsons.

As well, a very, very special thank you to the clerk of the committee, Tonya Grannum, and to the researchers, Jerry Richmond and Jennifer McKay.

Without their support, the task of preparing this report would have been daunting indeed.

The committee believes that the recommendations contained in the report can form the basis for an innovative and progressive new fuel and energy policy for Ontario [inaudible].

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Mr Galt has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I move that the following amendments be made to the membership of certain committees: Mr Stewart replaces Mr Chudleigh on the standing committee on general government.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WORLD YOUTH DAY

JOURNÉE MONDIALE DE LA JEUNESSE

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I wish to begin by extending a warm greeting to two very special visitors in the gallery today, His Eminence Cardinal James Francis Stafford, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity of the Vatican; and Father Thomas Rosica, national director for World Youth Day 2002.

Cardinal Stafford has come to Ontario in his role as a major supporter of World Youth Day, which will be the biggest international event ever staged in Canada. He has also come in support of the opening of the Vatican art exhibit, *Images of Salvation*, at the ROM.

As you may know, international World Youth Day programs are held every two years. They were launched by Pope John Paul II in 1984 to encourage Catholic youth from around the world to celebrate their faith. While it is an event staged by the Catholic church, people of all faiths and backgrounds are welcome to take part in the celebrations.

Two years ago Pope John Paul II announced that Toronto would host the next World Youth Day in July 2002. The Ontario government became involved in the project in 1998 when we, along with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the city of Toronto and the federal government bid for the event. Our partnership has continued over the past two years working closely to ensure a successful event.

As the largest conference that we have ever hosted, this is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate that Ontario can host large-scale international events. Hundreds of thousands of visitors from 150 countries, including some 3,500 media representatives, will come to Ontario to experience the celebrations. A Tourism Toronto study indicates that the economic spinoffs in this province could reach \$300 million, as well as support thousands of jobs.

World Youth Day is not just a Toronto event. International delegates will come from all over the world to take part in Days in the Dioceses, visiting local parishes across Canada and throughout Ontario from July 18 to July 21, 2002. The main program will unfold in Toronto from July 22 to July 28, concluding with a papal mass at Downsview Park on Sunday, July 28.

In addition to the events with the Pope, while in Toronto the delegates will also volunteer with social service organizations throughout the city. Many of these projects will have a lasting legacy, like the building of a home with Habitat for Humanity at Downsview Park. These

projects will benefit our social service organizations by providing well-needed volunteers as well as promoting the importance of volunteerism to the youth of our province.

World Youth Day is less than two months away and there are still many things to be done. I wish to urge all the members to spread the word in their communities that 35,000 volunteers are needed to help organize World Youth Day and to host our international guests. I have agreed to host two pilgrims in my home and I encourage other members of the Legislature to do the same.

Ontarians have always been extremely generous in serving as volunteers to build better communities and I hope that we can demonstrate our generosity to all the pilgrims so that at the end of the event they will go back and talk about the wonderful hospitality they have received here in Ontario.

Ontario is already seeing the benefits of hosting World Youth Day this July. In three days the Vatican art exhibit Images of Salvation will open at the ROM. This major exhibit of religious art will include more than 140 artifacts from the Vatican Museums, the Italian Ecclesiastical Museums and other private Italian collections. The paintings, sculptures and liturgical objects include works by some of the western world's greatest artists, many of which have never been seen outside of the Vatican or outside of Italy. The exhibition will be open to the public from June 8 to August 11. Tonight the province will be hosting a special reception with Cardinal Stafford at the ROM, which will include a preview of the exhibit. All MPPs are invited to attend and I encourage you to go.

We have before us an excellent opportunity to showcase all that Ontario has to offer. I know that we will come to the assistance of the young people who will be arriving from around the world. The spirit of community and volunteerism that World Youth Day promotes is now, more than ever, needed since the events of September 11.

I am confident that together Ontarians and global visitors will benefit from this opportunity to share in this international celebration of faith right here in this province.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus, I too want to welcome His Eminence Cardinal James Francis Stafford and Father Thomas Rosica. Certainly their mission here today is a very important one. It is to promote an idea that should be a lesson to us all. They, and we as a community, are going to encourage Catholic youth from around the world to celebrate their faith. But the reality is that this is so much more than a faith celebration. It's a celebration of embracing people. It is, in fact, an ecumenical celebration where we welcome people from all faiths and beliefs to come and join us, to share experiences with us and, at the end, to grow with each other. One of the lessons that we will learn during this time is that it is important to be thy brother's keeper. It is a lesson for governments of all stripes to learn and to live.

We will be having youth from around the world come and visit us. The different dioceses of Ontario, from

Kenora straight through to Windsor, are preparing. I think in my own diocese of Sault Ste Marie and in my parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church—and I have to give my parish priest a plug, otherwise on Sunday I'll be in trouble during the homily—Father Caswell is working very hard with our youth representative, Paula Butcher, who is planning activities already for the youth who will be visiting our community. I think of Mike and Josie MacLaughlin, who are parent volunteers, who are going to be hosts as well to youth and the exciting things they are planning for the youth who will be visiting the diocese of Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury.

1400

Mrs Molinari didn't talk too much about the World Youth Day cross, but I think His Eminence Cardinal Stafford and Father Rosica would like us to mention that because it is a significant part of World Youth Day. The World Youth Day cross is a simple wooden cross that stands four metres and weighs approximately 31 kilograms. Often compared to the Olympic torch, it has been criss-crossing Canada to prepare the country for World Youth Day here in Toronto. Since the World Youth Day cross arrived in Ottawa on April 11, 2001, it has travelled by commercial airline, by flight of light aircraft, by dog-sled, by pickup truck, by tractor, by sailboat and by fishing boat. That is significant, because what we have done is cover the corners of the universe in reality when we think of World Youth Day reflecting the values and the needs of the people who will be gathering here in Toronto.

Indeed this is a significant community, provincial, national and international event. It is a time to embrace each other. It is a time to pray. It is a time to reflect. It is a time to learn. It is a time for us to gather and say, "We must make this world a more caring place. We must help those who are less fortunate. We must involve ourselves in social justice issues that are important not only to the Catholic Church but to all faiths, to all beliefs, to all governments." World Youth Day is a time for us to gather, to care, to share and to say, at the end, "I am richer because of our shared experiences."

I know it is the prayer of every member of this caucus and I know it is the prayer of all members of the dioceses across Ontario that our Pope will be strong enough to make the visit to Toronto. The people of our province will welcome him warmly. Even in his absence, though, World Youth Day will accomplish the things that Pope John Paul wanted it to accomplish.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I'm pleased, as one of the representatives of the New Democratic Party who will speak today, to welcome our special guests here today, Father Thomas Rosica and His Eminence Cardinal Stafford, particularly Cardinal Stafford, who has come such a long way to join us in Toronto over these next few days.

We want to acknowledge our support for World Youth Day, both for the celebrations and obviously for the most important event, which will occur with the arrival of the Pope and the mass that will be celebrated. This of course will all occur in this city in July.

This is an extraordinary event, and we in this province and we in this city are very privileged and very honoured to be in a position to host it. The purpose of World Youth Day is, as has already been described, to encourage Catholic youth from around the world to celebrate their faith, and in that respect this city will see one million Catholic youth come from 150 countries to learn about how Canadians celebrate their faith. What is also important is that those same youth will also be teaching Ontarians, Ontario youth in particular, about how they live their faith in the countries from which they come. That will be a very important experience, to have that dialogue, to have that exchange and indeed to have that bond among so many youth who are Catholic but who would practise that faith so differently in their own homelands.

What's also important is that not only is it a celebration of faith, Catholic faith, youth in that faith specifically; it is also a celebration of youth. Frankly, for me, that's as important as is a celebration of my own faith. These youth who will come here will be our world's future leaders. They have much to teach us and teach each other. They will have much to share, they will have much to experience, and they have much in common. Many who will come will have in common that they have experienced war and famine and devastation and perhaps the death of many in their family, but I also think that they will have in common a hope for peace, and I think that will be reflected and reinforced during the celebrations, especially during the visit from the Pope.

On a very personal level, I was in my own parish on Sunday, Our Lady of Peace parish in Capreol, where there were many banners acknowledging that this is occurring and encouraging youth from our own parish to participate, and I hope they do.

As I said, I'm very pleased to welcome our guests here, and we look forward to the celebrations that will occur in this city this summer.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Very briefly, I would also like to rise and commend this wonderful group. It was my privilege, while I was a member of the city of Toronto council, to serve on the committee for World Youth Day, which was chaired by Councillor Mihevc, and to work alongside Father Rosica to develop the city of Toronto's policies and to develop all of the logistics, and the logistics here are enormous. Just so people understand, this is having to have food for hundreds of thousands of people, this is having to find water for them, this is having to find washrooms, accommodation and transportation. This is an enormous undertaking that the city of Toronto has embraced and I think has done, along with Father Rosica, an amazing job in getting prepared. We are going to be very proud in this city and in this province of how well it is going to be carried off.

We are also very proud that there are going to be a number of good works done in our city, everything from helping the homeless to Habitat for Humanity, by the youth who gather here.

The youth are coming from all over the world. Earlier this year I had the privilege of being on vacation in South America, and I can attest to the fact that there were posters in the many cathedrals and churches that I visited inviting people to come to Toronto. I hope that when the people come here, they will see this very rich multicultural, multi-faith, multilingual city, where we get along so well, and take that back to their own homes as well, because not only will we learn from them, but they will learn from us.

I turn it over to my colleague Mr Bisson for the last few seconds.

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): Comme on sait, il y a beaucoup de monde à travers notre province qui s'organise pour venir ici cet été pour la Journée mondiale de la jeunesse—à travers le monde, mais particulièrement le monde de la région d'Ottawa, de Timmins, de Kapuskasing, de Hearst, et cette journée, comme on sait, est importante non seulement sur la question de foi mais aussi sur la question humanitaire. On veut avoir un bon sommet cet été, et on dit à tous ceux qui se préparent, venez à la ville de Toronto. Ça va être quelque chose d'excellent pour nous et pour notre communauté.

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): On a point of order, Speaker: I think there is unanimous consent for each party to speak for approximately five minutes on the occasion of Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon Mr Baird: I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The occasion affords all of us, in Ontario and throughout the Commonwealth, to both acknowledge and thank Her Majesty and Prince Philip for their tireless energy and half-century of service to all of us.

At a young age, the then Princess Elizabeth, 21, vowed, "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service." And for more than 50 years, Queen Elizabeth II has honoured that personal commitment.

Her strongest attribute is undoubtedly her sense of duty. Since her accession to the throne, the Queen has given royal assent to more than 3,135 acts of Parliament. Her Majesty is currently patron of 620 charities and organizations, 433 of which she has held since her accession to the throne in 1952. And, in 50 years, the Queen has undertaken more than 251 official overseas visits to 128 different countries.

This fall, the Queen will make her 20th visit to Canada. Toward the conclusion of a visit to the United States in the early 1980s, the Queen remarked to then-President Ronald Reagan in her departing speech, "We're

going home to Canada tomorrow." When Her Majesty comes to Ontario this October, it is not really a royal visit but rather a homecoming.

Her Majesty has lived longer than most Canadians who are alive today. She has visited more communities in Canada than most Canadians have ever done or ever will. She regards us in the same special, familial way as did her late mother.

In a turbulent time and in a changing world, the Queen has been a beacon of stability and of tradition in Ontario, in Canada and throughout the Commonwealth. Yesterday, British Prime Minister Tony Blair summed it up well when he described her reign as a remarkable achievement, in which she had adapted the monarchy successfully to the modern world, had been stoic in the face of adversity and had been a unifying force in the midst of immense constitutional and cultural change.

Her Majesty, speaking in 1990 in Ottawa, my home town, stated, "The constitutional monarchy ... is a system in which those who represent the community come together and remain together, rather than dwelling on differences which might further divide them."

The jubilee is a time for unity, for learning about our institutions and their importance to the civil society, which together we have built under the stable framework of the crown.

Earlier this week, His Royal Highness Prince Charles summed up the feeling of many when he said to his mother, "We feel proud of you, proud and grateful for everything you have done for your country and the Commonwealth over 50 extraordinary years."

Long live the Queen.

1410

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I rise in this House today on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and Her Majesty's loyal opposition as we pay tribute to the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

Ontario—Loyal she began, loyal she remains.

After the Second World War, as after the First, there was a concerted royal effort to undertake empire tours again. In 1951 Princess Elizabeth, who was chosen to represent the King, gave Canada and Ontario an opportunity for another royal tour.

This was the first major royal tour in which the airplane played a major part, the journey from London and several internal connections being made by air.

It was the first time in which televised outside broadcasts allowed those Canadians fortunate enough to own TVs the chance to see the progress of the visit.

In Toronto, more than 40,000 people lined the streets to greet our royal visitors.

The Prince Arthur Hotel in Port Arthur, where the royal party rested overnight, spent several thousand dollars renovating one suite. Furniture, china, a chef and an elevator operator were flown in, and a window was raised three feet to keep out the public gaze.

In Kapuskasing, a chef made tea every 15 minutes between 7 and 9:30 am, so that whenever the royal couple awoke the tea could be sent fresh to their room.

While in Ontario during this visit, the royal visitors met the Dionne quintuplets, 17 years old at the time, in North Bay.

The Duke discovered that one of his valets shared his love of practical jokes and borrowed several gadgets that the valet had bought from a local joke shop to try out on his wife, the future Queen. Stories spread that the heiress to the throne had opened a small desk box to find a snake inside and had been chased along the corridors by the Duke, wearing a pair of monstrous false teeth, and she was forever wary of devices that might pass on an electric shock when touched.

When she returned to London, the princess said she hoped that the people from the United Kingdom would go out and make their lives beside the fine men and women who formed the nation of Canada. She described Canada as a country "on its way to becoming one of the greatest in the world" and for which "its people have placed in our hearts a love which will never grow old and which will always draw us back to her shores." Canada had become a second home to Princess Elizabeth.

After her accession to the throne, the Queen visited Canada in 1957 and became the first reigning sovereign to open the Canadian Parliament in person.

In 1959, the royal family visited many outlying districts never before visited by royalty, taking a cruise through the islands of Ontario's Georgian Bay on Lake Huron and touring nickel mines near Sudbury.

In the summer of 1973, the Queen reminded 1,400 guests at an official dinner given by this great province of Ontario that, "The crown is an idea more than a person, and I would like the crown to represent everything that is best and most admired in the Canadian ideal."

During the Queen's visit of 1982, there was much celebration of the long-awaited totality of independence after 115 years of diminishing reliance on England for foreign-policy decisions. It was during her five-day stay that the Queen faced national matters squarely when she spoke at the ceremony. She referred to differences and rivalries that existed in Canada and would likely always exist in such a "vast and vigorous land." The Queen continued, "Although we regret the absence of the Premier, it is right to associate the people of Quebec with this celebration, because without them Canada would not be what she is today."

By the 1980s the Queen and Prince Philip were truly old hands at visiting Canada. When the Queen and Prince Philip visited in 1984 to celebrate the province's bicentennial and sesquicentennial of the city of Toronto, there was great public enthusiasm. There were grand ceremonial salutes and presentations as the royal party arrived here at Queen's Park in a state landau: bagpipe tributes from Ontario police; a flypast of modern and heritage aircraft at the air force memorial down on University Avenue; a rousing, strident welcome for "La Regina" from the Italian community, where grape-crushing displays and the singing of ballads provided an eclectic variety of entertainment. After the official welcome, the Queen and Prince Philip planted two white

pines, Ontario's arboreal emblem, here on the grounds of Queen's Park. And they did the traditional walkabout through the crowds at Queen's Park.

In the evening there was a superb military spectacle at the old Exhibition Stadium. As the Queen arrived that night, the noise of the 21-gun salute startled the two leading horses. They shied, panicked and turned about face, to bring an otherwise flawless process to an embarrassing halt. Grooms and Horse Guards were quick to untangle the tack, but by then other horses had become fretful. So the firing of the cannon was wisely brought to an end. Toronto could rightly lay claim to being the only Canadian city to have given the Queen an eight-gun salute.

Also that year, the Queen saw a new, more multicultural Canada. In Brantford, she touched base with the Six Nations, who reminded her of the pact of loyalty they made with her great-great-great-grandfather, King George III, back in 1784. Enthusiastic flag-waving crowds bearing flowers and notes, young and old, from United Empire Loyalists to newly arrived immigrants have warmly welcomed her to every Ontario community she has visited, each of those visits inscribed in the history books with fond memories.

In 1997, the Queen visited London, Ontario, and I'll never forget that moment when she stopped to speak to me. During that visit, the Queen and Prince Philip stayed at the Red Tail Golf Course, the only time a reigning monarch has visited Elgin county.

Long may she reign. May she defend our laws and ever give us cause to sing, with heart and voice, God Save the Queen.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): It is indeed my honour to rise today and to salute the Queen on this her Golden Jubilee.

The world of Queen Elizabeth has changed very much since that time, 50 years ago, where a grieving daughter was thrust into the royal limelight. With it so has she changed, so have we all changed. The Queen's reign, as I said, began unexpectedly in 1952 when the reigning monarch, King George VI, the Queen's father, died suddenly at Sandringham after several years of ill health. News of his death reached the princess that afternoon in Kenya, where she was on Commonwealth duty. She immediately flew back with her husband to England. She flew back to London and was met there by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Following the funeral and a 16-week period of court mourning, she was crowned Queen on June 2, 1953.

Her political duties began immediately and she has never shrunk from those duties—not one day in 50 years. She has always taken her role as Queen seriously and presided over important reforms that have made royalty more accessible to the public than ever before. During the first few years of her reign she travelled to all parts of the Commonwealth never before visited by her predecessors. She introduced innovations, such as the royal walkabout, to allow the royals to meet as many people as possible. She allowed increased access into the lives of

the royal family like we have never seen before. In 1969, the first television filming of regular family life among the royals was allowed and, as they say, the rest is history.

Her dedication to an accessible, public monarchy had its price, but she was prepared to pay it. She has gone on to fulfill an astonishing number of duties, been involved with the works of hundreds of organizations and met more people in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, Canada and overseas than any other monarch, I believe, in the history of the world. Since 1952, she has conferred 380,630 honours and awards, received around 3 million items of correspondence and send almost 100,000 telegrams to centenarians.

With her commitment to a more accessible public monarchy came intense interest and scrutiny. Our connection with the Queen has been no less emotional. Upon her coronation, Canadians took to the streets to rejoice. Here was a young woman full of hope and promise, with the allure of royal life that captivates millions to this very day.

1420

Like Queen Victoria, it was assumed Queen Elizabeth II's reign would usher in Britain's rise to world power status. History deemed otherwise, but the Queen and her Royal Family left their mark on the Commonwealth nonetheless.

Through the years, news of the births of her children, their weddings and the births of her grandchildren have all been celebrated here, and the deaths in the Royal Family of the Queen Mum, Margaret and Diana have all been mourned here.

Royal visits have been a thing of pomp, pageantry and legend. We as Canadians dug in our heels in a debate in the early 1950s about whether the Queen should reside here for part of the year. Although most Canadians at that time did not agree with it and it never came to pass, we still have our ties to the monarchy. The majority of Canadians remain committed and maintain the institution the Queen represents as an important part of Canada's unique identity.

Much has changed in the world. We all have television sets now and watch the royal news and the gossip about what's happening in the Royal Family. Interest in the Monarch remains very much alive. Watching the Royal Family reveals as much about us as it does about them.

Her influence has been as constant as her Christmas television addresses, moments when she came into our living rooms to espouse opportunities for women in the 1960s, messages of unity for our own country in those troubling times of the 1970s, and more recently the virtues of fairness, justice, tolerance and understanding.

In many ways she has been a pragmatic Queen who understood her people do not live in a fairy tale world, yet yearn for peace, love and stability. That is in fact what makes her so endearing. The Queen has had her share of personal grief and sadness. I remember watching her describe her year of annus horribilis on the television, but she has never relinquished her political or personal duties.

While her life has always proven to fascinate, it has been a very public life marked by sacrifice, loyalty to her people and commitment to tradition. Her voice has always been one of unity. She has tried in her unique way to build bridges to the future. She has worked tirelessly. Only four earlier monarchs have achieved this milestone of a Golden Jubilee. In the course of her 50-year reign she has undertaken more official duties and met more of her subjects than any of her predecessors. She has been faithful to this country; she has been faithful to the Commonwealth. She has served the people of this nation to the best of her ability through dramatically changing times and that is something to celebrate.

I leave the final words to the Queen herself, and she described these just in the last few days in her jubilee message to the Commonwealth:

"This anniversary is for us an occasion to acknowledge with gratitude the loyalty and support which we have received from so many people since I came to the Throne in 1952. It is especially an opportunity to thank all those of you who help others in your own local communities through public or voluntary service."

"I hope also that this time of celebration in the United Kingdom and across the Commonwealth will not simply be an occasion to be nostalgic about the past. I believe that, young or old, we have as much to look forward to with confidence and hope as we have to look back on with pride."

A toast to the Queen.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Today we are truly blessed, honouring the Pope and the Queen. I would like to ask the House for one moment of meditation and to pass a congratulatory message on the birthday of our member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

The Speaker: I'm sorry. It's his birthday. I didn't understand the first part.

Mr Sergio: I think it's a blessed day. We've been honouring the Pope and we've been congratulating the Queen. I thought it would be very appropriate to have one moment—not one minute, but one moment—to meditate and congratulate the member for Prince Edward-Hastings. Happy Birthday.

The Speaker: Happy Birthday. I've got it now. It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the Minister of Energy. Ontario citizens will be very troubled today to hear from a number of board members at Hydro One, that successor company to Ontario Hydro entirely owned by the Ontario government. Board members like the chairman, Sir Graham Day, and Dona Harvey, a board member of some

years' service, have both made plain today that from their perspective as board members at Hydro One, the government of Ontario knew from the beginning, in 1999, all aspects of the executive compensation issues that have so aroused the interest of this Legislature and the Ontario public.

My question to the Minister of Energy is: will you table in this Legislature, at the earliest point, all communication that the Ontario government provided to the board of Hydro One, and particularly any and all written direction to the board of Hydro One around matters of your concern in respect of executive compensation?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I suppose the member opposite is speaking about the minutes that were forwarded from the meetings of the board of directors to the Deputy Minister of Energy and to the ministry staff.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Hold on, guys.

I have in my hand some examples of those minutes that we received with respect to the packages. I'll be happy to share these with the member opposite if he chooses.

Let me just say there are examples of benefits and so on. The minutes are in such a way as, "They reported on the discussion of this item, and the committee indicated that the committee supported the recommendation." That's the kind of information we got with respect to minutes.

Mr Conway: Three and a half or four years ago, the Harris-Eves government appointed Graham Day and Dona Harvey and the entire board. Mike Harris and Ernie Eves and Jim Wilson were very proud of their appointments. You appointed these people. Presumably, you gave them some specific direction as to how you expected your company, Hydro One, to be operated, and direction around issues of executive compensation, particularly in the last while when, according to former Minister Wilson, things started to go sour.

Minister, my supplementary question is: will you table any and all written direction from the Ontario government in the last three and half years that you provided as a government to the board at Hydro One? In particular, will you table any and all information that would make it clear that in the last 18 months, while you were apparently unhappy, you were providing some specific written direction around these contentious issues of executive compensation that apparently you're now saying the board did not respond to?

Hon Mr Stockwell: It's kind of interesting—I've heard this kind of line of questioning for the last few weeks. The member opposite has an opportunity to pick the taxpayers' side or Sir Graham Day's side by giving us unanimous consent to support the bill I introduced in this House yesterday.

It seems to me that what would be prudent at this time would be to pass the bill by unanimous consent today. I will give full warning to the members opposite that I will be asking for unanimous consent once again to pass Bill

80, the bill I introduced yesterday to deal with the board of directors.

With respect to correspondence, we have received, as you outlined earlier, the correspondence that was given from the Hydro One board of directors by way of minutes. I'll be happy to provide these minutes. I know of no other information provided to the board at Hydro One other than the fact that they were asked to perform their fiduciary duties in the proper and acceptable fashion, as any board of directors would do, and respect the shareholders' wishes. Those are the things I know.

Mr Conway: I say with all due respect that I'm concerned, because as a member of this Legislature, I believe that I am not being told the truth.

1430

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): You're going to have to withdraw that. You can't say that.

Mr Conway: Mr Speaker, I will withdraw myself, because my problem as an honourable member is that I have two versions of reality, both of which cannot be true. Somebody is not telling me the truth, and that lack of truth is going to cost the Ontario electricity consumer and the Ontario taxpayer millions of dollars.

I want to know, in the public interest, what the truth of this situation is, because I have in my hand today two clear statements, one by the former chairman of Hydro One and the other by Ms Dona Harvey, not only a board member but a member of the compensation committee of the Hydro board. Sir Graham Day, chairman of the Hydro One board, and Ms Dona Harvey are both saying that since the beginning of Hydro One's operation as a commercial company in 1999, the board told the government everything they were doing around issues like executive compensation. That is the evidence of both Sir Graham Day and Ms Dona Harvey.

The crown, as represented by the minister, is giving a very—

The Speaker: Order. The member's time is up.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. Just before the minister gets up, I didn't hear the withdrawal that I talked about in the beginning.

Mr Conway: I can't withdraw, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: That's fine. It's your last warning.

Mr Conway: I'll save you the bother. This is a multi-billion dollar cover-up, and I'm going to find out who's lying.

The Speaker: I name the member and ask him to leave the chamber.

Mr Conway left the chamber.

The Speaker: Just so we are clear, the member was named, and he is going to have to withdraw for the entire afternoon.

I don't believe a question actually came through there. It was more of a statement. Minister.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Speaker, let's be clear. What he was quoting from—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm trying my best to talk over the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. I appreciate he's very exercised about this.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): Answer the question.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The truth of the matter is simply this—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The minister has the floor. Sorry for the interruption. Minister.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Let's get this thing straight. Everybody knew the compensation package. It was filed at the OSC on May 17, 2001. Dalton McGuinty talked about the compensation package in this House. Everybody knew the compensation package. There was no cover-up. There was nothing to hide. She spoke about the minutes. I have the minutes with me. I offered the minutes to the member. He doesn't want the truth. He wants to grandstand. He wants the rhetoric. He doesn't want the truth. He can't handle the truth.

The Speaker: It is now time for a new question.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Minister of Energy. I'm not talking about post-prospectus. I'm not talking about post-OSC filing. We're talking about the revelation from one of the deposed, resigned board members of Hydro One. This is what they said—not that the government knew post-OSC filing, but that the government has known all along. She said, "From the beginning, we have made the government aware of all of our decisions ... and they ... were well aware of the compensation package. I don't think it came as a surprise." That's Dona Harvey.

Then she got more specific. She said, "The government has known about the compensation packages since 1999. Every year, on a regular basis, they get briefed." The government is saying they didn't know. I say to the minister, we need to know the truth. What I'm hearing today—

Interjection: You can't handle the truth.

Mr Bryant: You can't handle the truth, because the truth would involve this minister standing up and taking responsibility for what this government was supposed to do as a shareholder instead of running Hydro One into the ground. Let's get the truth on Hydro One. How long have you known about the compensation packages?

Hon Mr Stockwell: No one has denied knowing the compensation packages. No one has denied it.

Interjection.

The Speaker: This is the last warning for the member for Kingston and the Islands. You're not going to continue to shout across like that or you're going to be gone for the afternoon as well.

Sorry, Minister.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No one has denied they filed at the OSC in 1999. They filed at the OSC in 2000. They filed at the OSC in 2001. They did the prospectus. Everybody in this room knew the truth. They knew what they were being paid. You knew in 1999, you knew in 2000 and you knew in 2001; in fact, your leader quoted in May

2001 about what the compensation packages were for these people. Everyone knew it. We never denied knowing it. All you had to do was have the capacity to be able to read to know what the compensation was. We've never said anything different. What are you going after here? The truth is clear: we all knew. Hallelujah.

Mr Bryant: So why the hell haven't you done something about it?

The Speaker: Order. You're not going to be able to use language like that. I ask you to withdraw it.

Mr Bryant: Withdrawn.

Hon Mr Stockwell: When I got into the Ministry of Energy and they briefed me on these salaries, I went on the consultations, spoke to the Premier, said, "We have to deal with this. These are excessive."

So we did what we did. Why didn't we do anything about it? As of yesterday, we did something—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. It's too noisy. The House leader for the official opposition, this is his last warning as well. I'm not going to continue to get up. Does anybody else want to be included on the list? I'm not going to continue to get up like this. We're just going to start throwing people out.

Minister?

Hon Mr Stockwell: So the decision the board took on May 17, to gerrymander the pay packages, that was it, that was the last straw, as Minister of Energy. I then moved forward and sent the letter. I sent the letter and introduced legislation. Now, where are you guys on the legislation? Where are you guys? Where are the strong-minded, tough Liberals and NDP? You're gutless. You're gutless. You've got a chance to protect the taxpayers. You're gutless—

The Speaker: Order. I'm going to make the Minister of Energy withdraw that as well.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Withdrawn.

The Speaker: In the last few days, personal accusations have been flying regardless of the circumstances, all sides have been flying with personal accusations, and it's not helpful. I would ask all members to refrain from personal attacks against other members. We know it's a very controversial issue, but it isn't helpful when people use language like the minister and the member for St Paul's did. It doesn't help the debate, and quite frankly we're not going to be able to proceed. One side does it, the other side does it, and all we end up with in here is chaos. The people of the province expect answers. That's what question period is for, not to have both sides yell at each other like a bunch of schoolchildren.

It is now, I believe, time for—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Sorry. I apologize. Supplementary, the member for St Paul's.

Mr Bryant: Look, I think everybody would agree that a government that does not hold itself to account to this Legislature and to the people is a government that has run amok. We all know that power corrupts and all power corrupts absolutely.

I have heard nothing from this government in terms of having the courage to hold themselves to account and say what mistakes this government committed with respect to the handling of executive compensation packages around Hydro One from 1999 to the present.

1440

If this government had courage, it would have done something—not now through this last-minute hatchet job, however necessary; it would have done something when Minister Wilson said, in his own words, that there were abhorrent compensation packages underway. They would have done something earlier this year, they would have done something last year or they would have done something the year before, but they didn't.

My question for the government is quite simple: are you saying that when it comes to this government's handling of executive compensation packages of Hydro One from 1999 to the present, you guys did nothing wrong?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The year 1999 and the year 2000, as they were filed, were probably defendable remuneration packages. They were in line with industry standards. When they got out of line was 2001. After 2001 they became extravagant and overly generous. What I can say is that all those packages were filed.

The question you ask is—when I became Minister of Energy did I act quickly, swiftly and decisively. The question has to be put back to you as the critic. If this was such a burning and concerning issue to you and your leadership, why didn't you talk about this to anybody else in the province of Ontario? Why didn't you ask a question? Why didn't you bring this forward as an issue?

I'm not really sure. It was all public information. All you had to do was read it. You never, ever brought it forward. Furthermore, your leader, on December 12, told us he's in favour of privatization of Hydro One, as well as the generation side—except he thought too quickly, so when he thinks too quickly, we're not sure whether we take his word for it.

Let's ask the question and reverse it. If this was a burning issue, was all public, were you asleep at the switch?

The Speaker: It is time for a new question.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, you want the people of Ontario to believe that your government knew nothing about the ridiculous salaries at Hydro One until a couple of weeks ago. But again I'll quote from Dona Harvey. She said, "From the beginning, we have made the government aware of all of our decisions. They got our minutes. They are regularly briefed and they certainly were well aware of the compensation package"—your government. As to your personal awareness, I really don't care. I want to know about your government over the last three years. Are you saying that Dona Harvey is not telling the truth?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm saying that Dona Harvey may have provided us with the minutes. I have the minutes. I'm asking you to listen to what the minutes say.

"D. Harvey reported on the discussion in the items committee and indicated the committee supported the recommendation"—that's the information we got.

"That the board of directors grant approval to proceed with development in place of long-term incentive plan with design frameworks contained in the memorandum of the board dated December 16." That's the information she's talking about.

"That the retainer for serving on Hydro One Inc board for the directors be \$25,000 per annum." That's what she's talking about.

"Ms D. Harvey reported on the human resources and policy committee discussions on the annual performance of the president and the base salary adjustment be made as recommended by the committee."

Those are the minutes Dona Harvey is talking about. If you're trying to peddle a theory that somehow we had up-to-date daily briefing minutes from this operation that somehow outlined exact compensation levels, it's patently absurd.

Dona Harvey said she gave us the minutes. Yes, these are the minutes. They tell you no more and significantly less than what you and I knew from the OSC application files. So, yes, she gave us the minutes, but there's nothing in the minutes. Just look up the files and you know how much they get paid.

Mr Hampton: Minister, your answer might be more credible if Ms Harvey were all alone, but she's not all alone. Sir Graham Day, the person you handpicked to be chair of Hydro One, said, "The Ontario government has been aware of the changing compensation packages since the company was established in 1999." A member of your own cabinet, Jim Wilson, said he knew about the pay packages all along. Are you saying that Dona Harvey, Sir Graham Day and Jim Wilson aren't telling the truth?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I've said, yes, we all knew. We knew in 1999, we knew in 2000, we knew in 2001. When they filed at the OSC, you knew, I knew, everybody here knew. When I became Minister of Energy, we saw the compensation levels, which skyrocketed at that point in time. We made a decision that we had to deal with because it was overly generous.

I am not suggesting to you that we didn't know. Of course we knew. Everybody in the province knew. All you had to do was tap into the Web site and look up their pay packages.

Let me just give this straight: we all knew what their pay packages were. You knew, they knew, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt knew, although he now claims he didn't. We all knew what their pay packages were. We've never denied that. What's the point of your question?

Mr Hampton: Minister, if Wilson knew that the pay packages were out of line—because that's what he's quoted as saying in the press—and your hand-picked chair of Hydro One says you knew and Dona Harvey, who was chair of the compensation committee, tells you that your government knew, can you tell us why your

government did nothing in 2000 and 2001, and you've only done something now, ie, blame the board when it's become public?

Hon Mr Stockwell: It's been public forever. It's been public every time they filed. What are you talking about, "since it's become public"? Whose team are you on: Sir Graham Day's or the taxpayers'? Whose team are you on: the board of directors', who think this is a reasonable payment, or the taxpayers' and ratepayers'? Whose team are you on: the Hydro One board's or the taxpayers'? We're on the taxpayers' team, and if you're on the taxpayers' team, give us unanimous consent and support the bill.

The Speaker: New question?

Mr Hampton: I was raising these issues six months ago, and your former Minister of Energy was saying it was just fine.

I want to address this question to the Deputy Premier. It was your board; you appointed the chair, and you appointed all the board members. They say that your government knew full well everything that was happening, but now your government is trying to say, "Oh, no. It's all the board's fault."

Very recently, the federal government appointed a legislative committee to look into misleading statements made by the former Minister of Defence. I'm asking you today, since your government is saying it's all the board's fault, and the board is saying your government knew all along, let's get this to a legislative committee so we can find out the truth. Will you do that?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I will refer that to the very capable Minister of Environment and Energy.

Hon Chris Stockwell: I say to the leader of the third party that this phantom letter you dreamed about has still not arrived at my office. You said to me yesterday that you'd give me a copy. I still haven't received it, so I don't know what you're talking about with respect to this letter.

Secondly, there's a disagreement. You're saying we need to call an inquiry or some process to determine the truth because we're saying we didn't know and the Hydro board is saying we did know. Let's be clear: we're saying we knew, OK? OSC filed in 1999 and 2000. They had defensible pay packages at that point. In 2001 they were not defensible and we acted on it. There's no need for a commission to determine whether we knew. I'm telling you as clearly as I can: we knew, you knew, they knew. There's no disruption here. We all knew the pay packages. I don't need an inquiry to determine that we're admitting we all knew what the pay packages were.

Mr Hampton: To the Deputy Premier: if your government is saying that you knew all along and you did nothing, then I am suggesting that this go to a legislative committee so that we can determine once and for all—we can see the minutes, we can see the directions from your government to this board. What's happening here is that the hydro ratepayers of this province are going to be hit with millions of dollars to pay your government's bumb-

ling and bungling, and they don't deserve to be forced to pay that without knowing who is responsible. You want to hold the Hydro One board responsible; they're saying you knew all along. Let's put it before a legislative committee and find out who is really responsible. If you want to get to the truth, it seems to me that's what you have to do. Will you do that, Deputy Premier?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Oh, my goodness. We knew. We don't need a committee to determine if we knew or we didn't. We said we knew, we said you knew, we said they knew.

Interjections.

1450

Hon Mr Stockwell: I've just quoted the minutes. Come on over and have a look. You see, those are the minutes. I've read you the minutes. Do you want to have a look at them? Come on over and I'll show them to you.

The only committee we're going to have to establish, the only group that's going to have to convene to determine what's going on in this place will be to determine where your letter is that you claim to have sent six months ago.

The Speaker: New question. The member for St Paul's.

Mr Bryant: Minister, you're making it sound like you, the shareholder—and you're the shareholder, you're the minister—are some passive observer in all this, like you were maybe a commentator or a pundit. The difference between the folks who sit up there and cover the news and the fellow who's sitting over there in that chair is that you're ultimately responsible for those pay packages. Not only did you know about them, you approved them. You approved the \$180,000 car allowance. You approved the \$6-million golden parachute. You could have stopped it. You had an option. You were the shareholder and you did nothing. Now what I'm asking you to do is stand up and say you made a mistake. You were asleep at the switch and the taxpayers are going to pay the price.

Hon Mr Stockwell: First, the taxpayers are not paying one red cent, nothing.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No. I understand the member across is a lawyer and I appreciate it. I've got so many third party statements about the fact that we insulated with this legislation and that we won't pay one red cent.

Second, we have dealt with this issue very clearly. We have acted with new dispatch. We introduced a bill yesterday. We're asking the board of directors to step down. They did that. We want to freeze the compensation.

All we're asking you to do is to give us unanimous consent for this bill. I will be asking again later today for unanimous consent, which you refuse to do. Why do you refuse to do that? Why do you not want to protect the taxpayers? Why do you want to play politics with such a very important issue? Why, I say to you? Whose team are you on, the Hydro One board team or the taxpayers'

team? We're on the taxpayers' team. Why aren't you on that team?

Mr Bryant: Well, I say to the Hydro executioner, let's see what you think about the other \$2-million executive in an Ontario Hydro successor company. As we said yesterday, and has been confirmed today by officials from Ontario Power Generation, president Ron Osborne on his T4 is going to be getting more than \$2 million from the OPG.

Let's be clear. It's been confirmed. We were right and you were wrong. You were wrong and we were right. Now let's see you stand up and act with due dispatch. You said before that the \$2 million man Ron Osborne's pay package was unacceptable. It is unacceptable. What are you going to do about it?

Hon Mr Stockwell: There is Liberal revisionism at its best. That's not what you said yesterday, my friend. That's not what your leader said yesterday. Here we've got Andy of Mayberry coming in to bail out Opie because Opie stepped in it yesterday and all the good people of Mayberry are cheering in the background.

That's not what Opie said yesterday, Andy. What he said was that at Hydro One, we're paying the president annually \$2.2 million, and you know that's not true. You know it was accrued over three years and you know Ron Osborne's done interviews and said he's getting nothing this year. Something's gone smelly in Mayberry. We've got Andy up trying to clean up the smell that Opie left yesterday.

OTTAWA CONGRESS CENTRE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): Mr Speaker, you'll be pleased to know I have a new topic. My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Recreation. Last week in the Ottawa Sun, Deputy Prime Minister John Manley said the federal government is not committing funds to the expansion of the Ottawa Congress Centre. I find this rather confusing because it's my understanding that the Liberal government has a generous surplus.

You might wonder where that surplus came from. I believe it came from the economic policies of the province of Ontario brought in by our Premier when he was the Minister of Finance. Those policies were later copied by the Honourable Paul Martin, who, by the way, is probably the best politician the Liberal Party has ever seen, but he got fired.

Minister, what is this government's response to Manley's comment that expansion of the Ottawa Congress Centre does not qualify for federal funding because it's owned by the province?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): I'm a little concerned about the comments by Minister Manley, because our provincial government nominated the expansion of the Ottawa Congress Centre under the Canada-Ontario infrastructure partnership program, run by Minister Allan Rock. We think this is a good project for the citizens of Ottawa, so much so that

three years ago when I sat down with Mayor Chiarelli, who is a member of the Ottawa Congress Centre board, I asked him to lobby the federal government to ensure that convention facilities were included in the infrastructure program.

In January this year we committed \$127 million from this fund, new SuperBuild funding for Ottawa, including \$25 million for the Ottawa Congress Centre. Minister Manley has said there's no federal money, but we have yet to hear from Minister Rock. We still think he's in charge of the program. We have yet to hear if he and the federal government are going to support the Ottawa Congress Centre.

Mr Galt: Minister, indeed it is hard to know who is in charge in Ottawa—you referred to Minister Rock—but I'm sure the people of Ottawa are pleased to know that the provincial government is committed to the much-needed expansion of their convention centre.

The mayor of Ottawa, Bob Chiarelli, said last week in the Ottawa Sun that he "absolutely empathizes" with John Manley that the provincial government should cover the cost of expanding the Ottawa convention centre. To me, it sounds like a Liberal is a Liberal is a Liberal; they're all in the same mess. But I'm wondering if the federal government is signalling that since they own Fort Henry in Kingston, the federal government should cover the total cost of the fort.

Minister, what is the city of Ottawa's level of commitment to the Ottawa Congress Centre's expansion?

Hon Mr Jackson: We're getting a mixed signal from the mayor of Ottawa. It would appear that he may have convinced Minister Manley that the city of Ottawa has no leasehold interest in the Ottawa Congress Centre.

This is a significant piece of infrastructure to the economy of Ottawa. In fact, the Ottawa Congress Centre projects that the economic impact of lost business waiting for the expansion is about \$26 million. To the extended community of Ottawa, with restaurants and hotel space and everything else, it's about \$132 million. By not getting the support, and the support of the city of Ottawa, we've had 340,000 hotel room nights lost as a result of the lack of expansion.

We are concerned that the federal government is a 20% tenant at the Ottawa Congress Centre, and we know they need additional space. Our concern is that the real agenda is that the federal government is thinking of building a convention centre in Hull, Quebec, instead of putting the money in Ontario and supporting the city of Ottawa.

We need to hear from the city of Ottawa, if this is a priority.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): The question is for the Minister of Energy. Is the total compensation package for President Osborne for 2002 satisfactory? Is it satisfactory or not?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): The satisfactory

compensation he receives—I believe it's \$1.6 million in salary and a bonus accrued over three years—is within industry standards. It's in the 50th percentile of people who hold similar positions. He also came over from Bell Canada at a very similar salary. He's done a good job at OPG. OPG is running well. They've done a good job of privatizing. They've done a good job setting up the open market. They are divesting themselves and creating competition. I think Mr Osborne has done a good job, and at \$1.6 million or \$1.7 million a year, it's within the 50th percentile. I suppose that's reasonable.

Now, if we go back to periods of time when others were paid at this level of private sector compensation, you'll find that under the NDP and others the salaries get high. There's no doubt about it.

1500

Mr Bryant: Wait a minute. There's a bit of a double standard here. Over in Hydro One, Eleanor Clitheroe's salary of \$2 million-plus was said to be unacceptable. I heard that from you and from the Premier many times. I heard from you yesterday and from the Premier that \$2.3 million was unacceptable. Where between \$2.3 million and \$1.7 million do you have a problem? Are you trying to tell me that it's not OK for Eleanor Clitheroe to be making, in total, over \$2 million, but it is OK for President Osborne with salary, bonus and other compensation, which has been confirmed to be over \$2 million? Why is it not OK for Captain Clitheroe but it is OK for President Osborne?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'll try again. That compensation package, with a long-term bonus, is over three years. Let's work slowly here. It's obviously a two-day question; it's been very complicated for them. Three years, OK? That's not one year, that's not two years, that's three years. So when they divide that number by three, that makes the compensation \$1.7 million or \$1.8 million. When someone makes \$2.2 million and someone makes \$1.7 million or \$1.8 million, that's significantly less. One is the private market; one is in the regulated market. One doesn't get the pension; the other gets \$1 million a year. One gets a \$6-million buyout; the other one doesn't. So it seems to me—and I've tried to be very slow, very clear—that it's significantly less than what Eleanor Clitheroe was making. If you'd like the note, I'll write it down in big letters for you to let you know the benefit is over three years, not one year.

ONTARIO EXPORT INDUSTRY

Mr Al McDonald (Nipissing): My question is for the Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. Minister, export industries support over 1.6 million jobs in Ontario, representing the equivalent of approximately 50% of the GDP. According to Standard and Poor's, each additional \$1 billion of Ontario exports translates into approximately 10,000 new jobs. Clearly more exports mean more jobs. What is the Ontario government doing to encourage companies to export the very best that Ontario has to offer the world?

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): I thank the most excellent new member for Nipissing for his question. Our government is continuing to foster a competitive economic business environment for Ontario. We've lowered corporate taxes, we've lowered personal taxes. We've eliminated red tape. We're investing massively in infrastructure. The result of this is almost 900,000 net new jobs since 1995. Ontario exported \$230 billion worth of goods and services in 2000, but there's more work to be done.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Well, whoop-dee-doo.

Hon Mr Turnbull: Apparently the member for St Catharines isn't interested in our success. Success creates jobs—do you understand?—jobs for people who work. Well, there's more work to be done.

It's estimated that there are 15,000 small and medium-sized enterprises that have the potential to export.

Mr McDonald: Minister, could you tell us more about Ontario Exports Inc and how it assists Ontario-based producers of goods and services?

Hon Mr Turnbull: As I was saying, there are some 15,000 small and medium-sized enterprises that have the potential to export, but only 15% are currently exporting. Ontario Exports Inc is staffed by a very talented group of professionals who are committed to increasing global exports, and their mandate is to expand trade around the world.

Currently OEI is working with some 4,000 clients to expand sales worldwide by developing export opportunities and assisting foreign buyers to find Ontario suppliers. In fiscal 2001-02, OEI assisted 396 firms and generated \$119 million in export sales. Our government will continue to aggressively work with the market to improve our business and investment climate.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question again is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, earlier today when I asked you, you said that your government always knew about the bloated salaries at Hydro One. Yet last Thursday I asked you when the government first became aware and you replied, "When the government first became aware? I can't answer that question. I don't know. I can't speak for the entire government. You'll have to ask somebody else." Between Thursday and now you've changed your story an awful lot. Can you tell us why last Thursday your answer was, "I don't know if the government knew. I don't know if the government knew anything," and suddenly today your answer is, "Oh, yeah, the government knew about the salaries over there. The government knew about the excessive salaries"? How can you change your story so completely in six days?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): You only got one applause from that caucus over there. I can understand.

This duck isn't flying, Howie. Be serious. When did the government know? There are 50,000 employees in the government. You're asking me to tell you when one of 50,000 employees potentially knew about a salary component for people at Hydro One. I can't answer that question. I did say to you at the time, when you asked me about the increased amount of money to Eleanor Clitheroe, that I was briefed a week to 10 days after, and that's when the ministry staff informed me. But your question was when did anybody in the government know. I can't answer for 50,000 people. My God, you can't even answer for nine; how do you expect me to answer for 50,000?

Mr Hampton: This gets to the root of this matter. This is a government that wants to govern but doesn't want to be accountable for anything. As soon as something goes wrong, "Oh, it's the fault of the Hydro board," or "Oh, it's the fault of somebody else over here." You put the Hydro board in place; you chose the chair of the Hydro board; you told them to behave like a private sector corporation. You knew about the excessive salaries and you did nothing. Instead of saying that all these people out here who are now pointing out that you knew it and that you did nothing are not telling the truth, why don't you come right out and admit you knew about the salaries, you knew how excessive the salaries were, you did nothing about the salaries and now you're looking for someone to blame? Why don't you admit that?

Hon Mr Stockwell: OK, we knew about the salaries. We knew when they were filed with the OSC in 1999, 2000 and 2001. When I was made Minister of Energy, I was briefed on the salaries and I began a process to review the salaries. The straw that broke the camel's back was May 17. We decided at that point that we had to take distinct and dramatic action, because the board was not listening to us or the taxpayers. There's your answer.

Now, will you do the right thing? Will you do the honourable thing? Will you protect the taxpayers? Will you and the Liberals do the thing the people want you to do and give this government unanimous consent on one of the best bills that's ever been brought in this House—protecting taxpayers' money, protecting taxpayers and ratepayers out there—and stop siding with the Hydro One board, who you've been ragging on for three weeks? Figure out what team you're on. Get on the taxpayers' side and endorse this bill by unanimous consent.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. On May 27 in this Legislature, Premier Eves said, "We will be committing to implement every one of Mr Justice O'Connor's 93 recommendations in the second report." Let's talk about the truth and commitments. I would like you to publicly address recommendation number 11: "The Ministry of the Environment should take the lead

role in regulating the potential impacts of farm activities on drinking water sources." It goes on to say, "It is essential that a single ministry"—your ministry—"... be responsible for developing and enforcing regulations."

The report is crystal clear. During clause-by-clause for nutrient management, the Minister of Agriculture's PA led the Tory pack to turn down amendments to define your ministry, as in the bill, as the Minister of Environment. It's incumbent on you to clarify your position. Will you commit that as the Minister of Environment you will be the lead minister on nutrient management?

1510

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): If you pick up Topical, the May 24, 2002, edition, we are advertising for a manager of implementation for resources planning and management, schedule 6, an 18-month job, to enforce the Nutrient Management Act. Not only is that our position, we're advertising for the job.

I'll send it over to you. The job is in Topical. We're looking for people. We're implementing the act, as we should. Without being in contempt, we're planning to proceed. The advertisement is in Topical. The ministry involved is the Ministry of Environment. We're moving forward on that bill and I don't know why you people are holding up that bill either. You've got some good legislation in this House. You're obstructionist. Do you know why? Because you don't respect the taxpayers like we respect the taxpayers.

Mr Peters: It would have been nice if the minister had answered the question and explained why the government turned down the amendment to make your ministry the lead ministry and put it in the legislation where it should be. You didn't do that.

Let's look at another of Justice O'Connor's recommendations, recommendation 16. It recommends the province "establish a system of cost-share incentives for water protection projects on farms." We know that society as a whole benefits from both environmental protection and inexpensive food. But once again, at committee this week, where your ministry was not present even though it should be the lead, OMAF's PA led the newly trained seals to turn down an amendment that would have put into law the requirement that the minister consider the desirability of using economic incentives to encourage compliance.

Minister, the agricultural community is under massive economic strain from a host of factors beyond its control. Don't tell the province's farmers to trust that maybe some day in the future you'll be there for them. We've heard that before with made-in-Ontario safety nets.

I'd like you to stand in your place today to commit that you as the Minister of Environment will implement Justice O'Connor's recommendation. Take the lead on nutrient management and ensure that there is financial assistance to help our farmers protect the drinking water in this province, as laid out in recommendation 16.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You can't be selective in reading Justice O'Connor's report.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Thank you. Bluster.

It talks about the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture working together. Bill 81 is one of those bills. It was carried forward with us working with the Ministry of Agriculture to put in a complementary bill that can be efficiently worked on and produced.

Let me say that it was stated by the Premier that recommendations would be implemented. One of those recommendations is the one you're talking about. The Premier of Ontario said that we're going to implement all of the recommendations, so all I'm going to tell you is that we are going to implement them. It matters not what's in the bill; it's what the government decides to do. We're implementing the recommendations and we'll go ahead and do it.

AIR QUALITY

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Surprise, surprise, my question today is for the Minister of Environment. Today is not only World Environment Day but it's also Clean Air Day in Canada. My constituents of Scarborough Centre are particularly concerned about air quality, especially with the summer fast approaching. I'm wondering if you can inform this Legislature what you are doing to improve the air we breathe.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): What an excellent question, too, from the member for Scarborough Centre. I know that she works and worries and is very diligent when it comes to this issue. I appreciate the question and I appreciate her hard work.

Air quality is a top priority of the Minister of Environment. Clean air and a well-protected environment are essential for the health and prosperity of all Ontarians. Today—I want to be very clear and say to the member for St Catharines because he will be excited about this—we launched a new initiative to increase awareness about air quality and the state of the environment. It's called OnAir. OnAir is an on-line emissions reporting registry. OnAir makes emissions information available via the Internet. Everyone has the right to know what is being emitted in the air, especially in and around their communities.

For the first time, people will access immediate, reliable information. The registry will make polluters more accountable to the public by providing timely information about airborne emissions. It will help consumers make decisions about their lifestyle and consumer choices. I know I have the full support of the member for St Catharines. He, I know, thinks this is a good idea, as do we, and I can only hope that he has enough clout in that caucus to talk those other folks into agreeing with this as well.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you, Minister, for that response. We know that just goes to enhance the goal of

Clean Air Day, which is particularly to increase public awareness and action. I am particularly interested, because I know, Minister, you are a man of action, in what specific actions you are taking to improve air quality in this province.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Awareness and action are the keys to our success. OnAir is just one of the many actions we're taking. I outlined some of the actions the other day, when I got a question from the member for St Catharines. I know he was very satisfied with my answer, because he was shouting platitudes as I was speaking.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You'll be impressed by this, Jim. We placed stringent caps on emissions from fossil fuel power plants. We fully implemented the caps, which will reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides by 53% and sulphur dioxides by 25%. Also, we're moving ahead with consultation on tough emission limits for other major industries. Our new emissions trading program will make polluters pay and reward companies that reduce emissions.

Next month—and this is good—Drive Clean will cover all of the southern Ontario smog zone, from Windsor to Quebec. This is the government that introduced Drive Clean—the green government, the environmentalists, the Conservatives. Drive Clean works. Smog-causing emissions dropped by 11.5% in two years in Toronto. We recognize there's more work to do. I'll tell you, the green people are happy—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education. I want to ask you about some of the kids who need help right now. They need your attention. They're kids like Natalie Druklec in Windsor. Natalie Druklec is a special-needs child. In years past, starting in JK, kindergarten and grades 1 and 2, she got assistance and did fine.

At the beginning of this year, at her school now, like emergency rooms in this province, they do triage. They had six children who needed assistance and only three EAs. Natalie gets very little, if any, assistance with her daily learning, and she's not doing well. Like thousands of other kids under your system, which requires paperwork to be done—her mother spent all summer collecting paperwork and assessments from rare specialists and so on to qualify, only to find out that her daughter was not going to get any support.

Minister, you know this is happening all around the province. You're diverting precious resources away from kids like Natalie into paperwork that you want. Will you pay up to boards like Windsor Catholic and make sure that there is help available for kids like Natalie? Will you do it in this next budget?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): The reason we're making changes to the

system is in order to ensure that special-needs children in the province get the support that they need. As I indicated the other day, we are presently funding special needs and special education in the amount of \$1.37 billion. We have kept our commitment. We are moving forward to provide the services and finances that those children with special needs need, and we will continue to do so.

Mr Kennedy: Here are printing samples. This is Natalie in grade 1. The printing is very clean and clear; it's almost adult-like. In grade 3, here's her printing.

Interjection.

Mr Kennedy: I hear the member for Durham heckling. Minister, her mother, teachers and board would like this not to be the case.

In grade 3, her printing is barely legible because she's regressing. She is in a board that has told you that their teachers and specialists are spending thousands of hours filling in your piles of paperwork at Natalie's expense. She is regressing. Not only her printing, but her comprehension and behaviour are all regressing because your government is too busy trying to find ways to justify not funding the assistance she needed.

Hon Mrs Witmer: This member of the opposition is making the same types of allegations that have been made in the past. Our government recently announced an additional \$350 million for students in this province. In fact, there is an extra \$100 per student for flexible funding that could be used by boards as they saw fit to respond to the needs of students in this province. That was a very significant announcement. We are committed and that's why we're going to be reviewing the funding formula.

Mr Kennedy: None of it was for special education, not one dime. How dare you?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again I would say to the member opposite, we have been increasing special education funding on a regular and significant basis. I would suggest to you that you take a look at the facts and stop with the fiction.

1520

LOGGING INDUSTRY HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question today is for the Minister of Labour. According to injury statistics from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, logging is one of the most dangerous occupations in the province. What part does the Ministry of Labour play in the health and safety of Ontario workers in the logging industry?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I thank the honourable member for the question. The Ministry of Labour enforces the health and safety regulations which apply to the logging industry. This includes regular enforcement of requirements for mandatory safety training and focusing on high-hazard operations. The ministry works with the WSIB, the Ontario Forestry Safe Workplace Association, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and

Universities and labour leaders to promote and communicate safe logging practices.

We've had tremendous success. According to the WSIB data, between 1997 and 2001, lost-time injuries in logging operations decreased by 18%, making Ontario logging operations among the safest in Canada. At the same time, the Ontario Forestry Safe Workplace Association is sponsoring a safety group with 142 firms. The result of this means the WSIB group rebate is about \$1.3 million, shared by 45 firms. Tremendous success. We're very pleased.

Mr Gill: Thank you for that answer. However, given the potentially dangerous nature of work in the logging industry, does the government have any plans on the horizon to improve safety in this industry?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I bet they do.

Hon Mr Clark: The member for St Catharines says, "I bet they do," and most certainly we do.

I am pleased to announce that on June 1 of this year amendments to the logging sections of the regulations for industrial establishments under the Occupational Health and Safety Act came into effect. With these amendments, employers must provide all mechanical harvesting equipment operators and supervisors with mandatory orientation training before they begin work, and operators must complete all the on-job training requirements within one year.

We're proud that Ontario is leading other Canadian provinces in ensuring that forestry workers are trained in health and safety. I know this is important for the members of the third party because they're keenly interested. Ontario is the first jurisdiction to mandate training for cutter and skidder operators, and now for mechanical harvesting operators and their supervisors. We're committed to making our workplaces the safest in the world.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Six months ago, I asked your Minister of Energy if your government approved of the new million-dollar-club salaries over at Ontario Power Generation. Your Minister of Energy on November 21 said that the "compensation package ... was set by the board and the board members, and we have great confidence in that board." And, "I ... stand behind our board."

Deputy Premier, the executive salaries at OPG now total over \$6.5 million a year and climbing. Does your government still find the executive salaries at OPG acceptable?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I think the Minister of Energy has been addressing the entire issue of salaries, whether it's Hydro One or OPG. I think all the actions that have been taken by our government indicate we take the issue of compensation and salaries very seriously. We are here to protect the taxpayers in the province of Ontario. As the

member knows full well, yesterday we introduced legislation order to ensure we could deal with the issue.

If you are really concerned about the taxpayers in Ontario, if you are concerned about excessive compensation, then I would recommend to you that you pass the legislation that was introduced yesterday in order to deal with the compensation at Hydro One.

Mr Hampton: The question you tried to stay away from is this: your Minister of Energy said that you found those executive salaries acceptable. Well, those executive salaries at OPG have now climbed to \$6.5 million a year. I assume by your answer that you can only find them acceptable. If that's the case, then explain to the people of Ontario how million-dollar salaries and bonuses can be acceptable at OPG if million-dollar salaries and bonuses are unacceptable at Hydro One.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The leader of the third party has an opportunity to actually do what is right and what's appropriate. If he is so concerned about compensation and salaries, why does he not pass the bill that was introduced yesterday by the Minister of Energy and deal with the issue of compensation at Hydro One? Let's get on and get the job done. Why are you stalling? Don't you care about the taxpayers?

VISITORS

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd just like to welcome to the legislature Mr Morrison's OAC class from St Pat's. They're in the gallery.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to put a motion that reads as follows:

1. That this House move into committee of the whole this afternoon for the purpose of considering Bill 80, and that this House will allow an introduction to that bill that would provide for amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to restore the successor companies of Ontario Hydro to its purview and to the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act to disclose all compensation for all employees of the successor companies of Ontario Hydro who earn more than \$100,000 a year; and

2. In exchange for passing this motion and Bill 80 today, the government agrees to introduce and pass a motion directing the standing committee on public accounts—

The Speaker: Order. You can't read the whole thing. They've got the gist of it; you can't read it out. We'll ask for unanimous consent.

Mr Duncan: I have a motion.

The Speaker: Yes, and you read the whole thing and then it might not—you give us the gist of it; we've got the gist of it. We're going to ask for unanimous consent, and I bet I know what the answer is going to be.

Is there unanimous consent? No.

Mr Duncan: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask unanimous consent to introduce a motion that would,

again, allow the passage of Bill 80 this afternoon, subject to the bill going to committee, and that the government agree to introduce and pass a motion directing the committee on public accounts to conduct an immediate inquiry into executive compensation of the successor companies of Ontario Hydro, reporting back to the Legislative Assembly by June 20, and we will pass the bill.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM-CARE FACILITIES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are over 525 long-term-care facilities across the province of Ontario housing over 60,000 Ontarians;

"Whereas over 60% of individuals living in long-term-care facilities suffer from dementia, 90% need assistance to eat and get dressed, and 56% have circulatory disease;

"Whereas government funding of long-term-care facilities by the government of Ontario has failed to keep pace with the growing needs of individuals in long-term-care facilities;

"Whereas government funding currently allows for only four minutes per day of assistance in washing and dressing long-term-care facility residents;

"Whereas government funding currently allows for only 10 minutes of assistance with eating per day and 15 minutes of programming per week;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide additional funding to Ontario's 525 long-term-care facilities to ensure adequate staffing and service for long-term-care facility residents and appropriate levels of care such that Ontario's thousands of long-term-care users can enjoy their later years in comfort and contentment."

I affix my signature, as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

1530

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government abandoned the minimum requirement for 2.25 hours per day of nursing care for seniors in nursing homes; and

"Whereas the Ontario government's own study in January 2001 showed Ontario's long-term-care residents receive less nursing, bathing and general care than elderly people in comparable jurisdictions in Canada, the United States and Europe; and

"Whereas poor management of residents leads to excessive acute care hospital stays and added strain on staffing levels in long-term-care facilities; and

"Whereas Ontario long-term-care residents now receive an average of only 2.04 hours of care per day, well below the level of 4.2 hours even the state of Mississippi provides; and

"Whereas US studies have indicated that total nursing care hours for long-term-care residents should be in the range of 4.55 total hours of care per resident per day;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the Ontario government to regulate a minimum requirement of at least 3.5 hours of care per resident per day."

This petition was sent to me by John Van Beek of SEIU. I have affixed my signature to it and I agree with the petitioners.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Mr Morrison and the OAC students from St Pat's will be very interested in this petition as it deals with their future. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it's from the College Student Alliance, who are partners in learning. It says:

"Whereas by eliminating the fifth year of high school, the government of Ontario has created a double cohort of students; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has promised that there will be a space at a university or college for every willing and qualified student; and

"Whereas Ontario's universities and colleges have not received sufficient funding from the government of Ontario to accommodate these double cohort students; and

"Whereas the quality of education at Ontario's universities and colleges has been declining in recent years; and

"Whereas the double cohort students will add an additional strain on an already fragile university and college system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To provide full funding for every new student entering Ontario's universities and colleges; and to provide additional funding to increase quality at Ontario's universities and colleges; and to provide targeted funding to colleges for skills and innovation; and finally, to increase the per student funding to the national average over the next five years."

I know the students at St Pat's and I certainly support this petition and I'll affix my signature to it.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Mike Harris government promised to institute patient-based budgeting for health care services in the 1995 Common Sense Revolution; and

"Whereas community care access centres now face a collective shortfall of \$175 million due to a funding freeze by the provincial government; and

"Whereas due to this funding shortfall, CCACs have cut back on home care services affecting many sick and elderly Ontarians; and

"Whereas these cuts in services are mostly in home-making services, forcing Ontarians into more expensive long-term-care facilities or back into hospital;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately institute real patient-based budgeting for health care services, including home care, so as to ensure that working families in Ontario can access the health services they need."

I affix my signature in complete agreement with the concerns of my constituents.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): Emmett Fraser is the page from the wonderful riding of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, the riding with the longest name, because our people have the biggest hearts and hopes and dreams.

I want to submit the last 2,000 names on my audiology petition from some 42 new Ontario communities. As you know, there have been over 12,000 names already presented from 251 Ontario communities. It reads as follows:

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas the new government policy has virtually eliminated access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas the new government policy has made it virtually impossible to implement programs in underserviced areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy has lengthened waiting lists for patients and therefore has a most detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Conservative government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to present the first petition of this session on this side of the House, I think.

"Whereas the citizens of Ontario are alarmed and disappointed with the 'golden parachute' severance packages available to senior executives at Hydro One; and

"Whereas the top five executives at Hydro One are not only making large salaries, but are also being given packages that would provide more than \$12 million if they leave, even of their own accord; and

"Whereas the citizens of Ontario consider this compensation to be clearly excessive;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario instruct the board and senior management of Hydro One to roll back the salaries and severance packages, with the goal of ensuring remuneration is in keeping with expectations of the citizens of Ontario, and

"Further, that the Parliament of Ontario take action to dismiss members of the board and/or senior management if they refuse to reduce the pay and severance packages for Hydro's top executives."

I am pleased to report that Minister Stockwell has moved such a bill and I am going to support this legislation because I am confident that we, with the support of the opposition, will pass it.

HYDRO ONE

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition that says, "Stop the Sale of Hydro One."

"To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas Ernie Eves and the Conservative government plan to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for" all of our communities;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand that Ernie Eves and the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition and I have affixed my signature to it.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have received a fairly long petition from Mr Nnaumbua Farrell. I'm going to submit it and I want to read it first as it is a request by the person I have supplied the petition to to have me read it in the House. It's a petition concerning the future of electricity in Ontario, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity in the province of Ontario is fundamental to nearly every aspect of our lives and has been and is crucial to its economic vitality and competitiveness, and is effectively an essential service;

"That this service, despite any shortcomings, has in the last three years generated more than \$1.6 billion in net income for the province of Ontario (this after contributing taxes to the province), in addition to providing reliable and affordable electricity to the businesses, industries and residents of Ontario;

"That the privatization of this service will most likely result in higher electricity rates as most recently evidenced by the cases of Alberta and California, statements by numerous experts and officials, and reports submitted to the Legislatures of several American states; and

"When considering the broad and serious nature of this issue, and that a public mandate was never received by this government to initiate any privatization measures in the first place, that recent public consultations were woefully inadequate in their timing (just before deregulation), subject matter (only one Hydro One), and time allotted;

1540

"I, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all current decontrol negotiations concerning the sale of Ontario's power plants by Ontario Power Generation be suspended and, if possible, that recent sales, such as the four Mississauga hydroelectric stations to Great Lakes Hydro Income Fund on May 17, be reversed;

"That all plants concerned with achieving the sale or lease of Hydro One be suspended;

"That, as soon as possible, a comprehensive province-wide public debate be held which clearly outlines the pros and cons of both privatization and remaining public;

"That, at the very least, following the previously stated measures, a public referendum, as opposed to a general election, be held to ascertain the true desire of Ontarians to have their electricity system privatized or public, especially as this would have been the case prior to 1995 with the passing of Bill 26;

"That then, and only then, any government measures, whether for or against privatization, that may be implemented be consistent with the wishes expressed by the aforementioned referendum, again whether for or against privatization; and

"That, after this, if it is decided that electricity is to remain in the public domain, practical measures be taken to ensure better management of the electricity system so

that any deficiency found in the previous Ontario Hydro may be corrected. In other words, have it run like a business (not the Enron type), but keep the business and its benefits ours.

"Thank you for your time and your consideration.

"Respectfully,

"Nnaumbua Farrell."

I concur, by the way, with the address in the petition, and I'm delighted to affix my signature to it.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): "To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

This petition is signed by a number of residents of Chatham and Blenheim, and I too sign this petition.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 135

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise today on a point of order relating to government notice of motion number 9, which is just about to be called here in the Legislature. My understanding is that it will be called for debate in the House this afternoon. There are two orders and notices motions coming forward, both of which don't allow for any committee time whatsoever to be able to introduce amendments. My point of order is around this particular issue. The motion, as you know, Speaker, is a time allocation motion. I respectfully submit that this motion is out of order, and let me explain why.

First, I want to remind the House of section 533 of Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, which reads, "Time allocation is a device for planning the use of time during the various stages of consideration of a bill

rather than bringing the debate to an immediate conclusion." I'm citing the reference with approval, because it reflects a well-established principle of parliamentary procedure.

The reason behind it finds its genesis in Erskine May, who writes that, "The purpose of many of the rules is to safeguard the rights of a minority in the House"—meaning us in this case—"to guard against the development of an 'elective dictatorship,' which some have predicted," and that's the point here. "Above all, the balance between the right of governments to obtain their business and the right of the House as a whole to examine it ... is maintained through the discretionary powers given to the Speaker."

I call upon you now, Speaker, to use that discretion in ruling government notice of motion number 9 out of order. As you know, the time allocation motion in question allows no time for debate at third-reading stage in one instance, one hour in the other, and no time for committee whatsoever, so we have no ability to bring in amendments to the bill.

Past Speakers of this House have ruled such motions in order, but this motion is different from those that were the subject of previous rulings in one significant respect. If this motion is deemed to be in order, it allows the government to pass legislation after only allowing debate on its principles rather than on its details. In all of the previous rulings on the order list of time allocation motions, the question arose after the bill had already had extensive committee consideration—in this case, we've not gone to committee—either in a standing committee of the Legislature or in the committee of the whole House. The motion before us today skips that stage entirely. We go from second reading over to third reading, with no time for committee.

Let me just address briefly what the implication would be if you were to rule government notice of motion number 9 in order. Second reading is a stage where a bill's principles—I repeat, principles—are at issue. It is either affirmed or denied by a vote in the House. As Beauchesne correctly points out, it's not regular on this occasion to discuss in detail the clauses of the bill. In other words, we don't have any ability to be able to deal with amendments at second reading; only at committee are we able to do that. The stage reserved for such detailed consideration of a piece of legislation is the committee stage, either in a standing committee or here in committee of the whole House.

Mr Speaker, I put you on notice that I have amendments that I want to bring forward to this bill and, by way of these time allocation motions, I will not be able to do so. The bill which is the subject of government notice of motion number 9 has not had the benefit of such detailed scrutiny. Members of this House have been deprived of the opportunity—indeed, the right—to consider a bill in detail for the purpose of making improvements by way of amendments. That is in itself not without precedence in this House, although—and I repeat, although—most times, it has only happened in instances where the bill

truly was non-controversial and, more importantly, House leaders had agreement to allow it to proceed directly from one stage to the other without it going to committee. So there was an agreement among the parties. In other words, the decision is normally reached through political accommodation.

But to have a bill that has not been the beneficiary of detailed scrutiny and to not have the opportunity to improve the bill by way of amendments, and also to be deprived of debate at third-reading stage of the process, makes a farce of the entire legislative process. If this debate on second reading, which is intended simply to be a vote on the principle of the bill, is allowed to be the final stage of the bill, then it abrogates the fundamental right of members of this assembly to give due sufficient consideration to legislation.

I submit that, indeed, it would fly in the face of Beauchesne's well-reasoned principle of parliamentary law, which is, "To protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority; to secure the transaction of public business in an orderly manner; to enable every member to express opinions within limits necessary to preserve decorum and prevent an unnecessary waste of time; to give abundant opportunity for the consideration of every measure, and to prevent any legislative action being taken upon sudden impulse." Clearly, a motion which essentially stops the legislative process in its tracks at only its second stage violates this fundamental parliamentary principle.

I respectfully ask you, Mr Speaker, to uphold the rights of the members of the opposition and of the Legislature by ruling government notice of motion number 9 out of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I'll consider that, thank you. In the meantime, I would like to hear other comments.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): On the same point of order as my colleague the member for Timmins-James Bay, I think there is a substantial amount of precedent, going back not just to Speakers Carr and Stockwell, with respect to what a time allocation motion is. By its very nature, a time allocation motion, which is allowed under section 46(a) of the standing orders, requires a substantial amount of debate to take place—at least three days' debate at second reading. After it has gone through first reading, been printed and distributed. By its very nature, a motion for time allocation supersedes the rest of the standing orders.

1550

I would agree with my colleague opposite on many of his points if the facts were with him, but they're not. This is not the final stage of the bill. Notice of this motion has been put in orders and notices. We're going to have debate on this motion for a full sessional day. We're going to have a vote on this motion. The bill in question will be called for second reading, and if the motion were to pass, it would complete the second reading stage of the bill. It would come back to the House on yet another day

for a third reading stage of the bill which, if the motion passed, would prescribe, as the will of the majority of the House, that the vote be ordered for third reading and that the question be put. Then it would obviously have to go through the royal ascent and proclamation stages of the bill.

This is not a complicated bill. It's a two-page bill. It's a very small bill, relatively non-controversial. All parties, I think, are planning on supporting the bill, as I indicated, from many of the speeches. I know the member opposite has some concerns that all members would want to consider when we debate this motion, as to whether or not they agree with the point of view of the member opposite on whether it warrants even further debate, as he's suggesting it does.

We've had a substantial amount of debate. The standing orders don't even allow for this to be discussed. Not only has the member opposite, the critic of the third party, spoken to the bill, but his leader has spoken to the bill, and Mr Parsons, Ms Di Cocco, Mr Peters, Mr Bryant, Mr Conway, Mr Hodgson, Mr O'Toole, Mrs Johns, Mr Wettlaufer, Mr Sterling, Mr Stewart, Mr Ouellette, Mr Barrett and Mr Baird. This bill wasn't tabled the other day; it was tabled back in November last year, well over eight months ago. I think if you look at the submissions, the rulings by Speaker Carr and Speaker Stockwell in the past about what the very notion of a time allocation motion is, you'd agree that motion number nine is in order.

Mr Bisson: Not to prolong the debate, Mr Speaker, the point here is that we've had three days of debate. We understand the rule that the government can bring time allocation after three days—

The Acting Speaker: I'm working furiously to get precedents and so on, if you'd just give me a few minutes.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): On this point of order, Mr Speaker: If you allow this motion to stand and say it's in order, you are essentially saying the government can come in and wipe out third reading debate in its entirety at any point if it passes a time allocation motion. Clearly this motion is in conflict with the standing orders, that a government on motion can say there will be absolutely no debate at all in one of the required readings of a bill. That is the implication of saying this motion is in order. I think the member for Timmins-James Bay is quite correct. The legislative process is very clear: introduction, approval in principle, a chance for amendment, and final approval and debate of whatever amended-or-not bill there is.

If a government is allowed to say, "No, we are not going to allow the legislative process to proceed by way of motion," then the rights of all members of this House have been usurped. This motion is offensive. It is clearly out of order.

I hope you will protect the rights of all members. Regardless of when a piece of legislation was introduced, regardless of when a government decides to call it and regardless of how many members have had a chance to

speak to it, it is fundamental to the legislative process that on third reading there is some opportunity to debate the merits of whatever the final bill is.

This is a very fundamental change. This is precedent-setting. I ask you to consider very carefully whether or not you're going to allow this kind of a precedent because, Speaker, we will see this kind of motion regularly now, where there will be no debate on third reading matters if you allow a motion like this to be in order. It is that critical to the legislative function and process. It is in your hands, Speaker, and I ask you to rule very, very carefully, because my rights as a member and the rights of all members of this House, today and in the future, are hanging in the balance.

Mr Bisson: On the same point of order: I just want to be very clear, because the government whip was trying to assert that we were objecting because there are only three days of debate. We understand that the government has the right. I don't like it, and I don't agree with it, but the government has the right, after three days of debate at second reading, to bring in a time allocation motion. We understand that, although we don't like it.

But the issue on this particular time allocation motion is that if you rule in favour, it will be precedent-setting. It will mean that, by way of these types of motions, members of this House will not have an opportunity to bring amendments to a bill in committee, either standing committee or committee of the whole, and will have virtually no ability to debate at third reading. In a sense, what we would have is an ability to debate a bill in principle but not to deal with the details of a bill. Government members should be very wary of this time allocation motion, because it is one we're all going to have to live with and it's not one we're going to be happy with.

So I'm asking you again, do consider this. This is precedent-setting. We have not had a Speaker rule on this type of motion before. If you rule in favour of this time allocation motion, it will be precedent-setting. It will not be a good thing for this Legislature nor for the rights of the members.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair would like to take a 15-minute recess to consider it—I hope that's long enough—in which case I'll be back.

The House recessed from 1557 to 1621.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Bisson, the member for Timmins-James Bay, I want to respond to your point of order in the following way:

I have carefully reviewed the standing orders respecting time allocation. The only restriction placed on such motions respecting how much time can be allocated at each stage is that which stipulates that a time allocation motion cannot be moved until there have been at least three sessional days of second reading debate. This requirement has been met with respect to Bill 135. Except with respect to the rules around notice and debate of such a motion, there are no other restrictions; standing Order 46 is very clear.

We've had several examples in this House of time allocation motions which allocate no committee time and

several examples which allocate no time for debate at third reading. In his ruling of July 21, 1992, Speaker Warner stated that standing orders do not "require that the motion provide for a minimum period of debate at third reading of a bill." Similarly, there is no standing order requirement that the motion provide for committee consideration.

Let me be clear. Each of the three required stages of legislative consideration will be decided by this House. Additionally, the required three days of second reading debate have occurred. All of the terms of the standing orders have been satisfied.

I find that government notices of motion 8 and 9 do comply with Standing Order 46 and are therefore in order.

Mr Bisson: Mr Speaker, I just want to thank you for the due consideration of my point of order.

Hon Mr Baird: I join my colleague from Timmins-James Bay.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I move that, pursuant to Standing Order 46 and notwithstanding any other Standing Order or Special Order of the House relating to Bill 135, An Act to recognize Ontario's recreational hunting and fishing heritage and to establish the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission, when Bill 135 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment, and

That the vote on second reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That on the same day that the bill receives second reading, it may be called for third reading; and

When the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

Mr Speaker, Bill 135 was presented for first reading in this House back on November 19, 2001. It's not a long piece of legislation, but I certainly believe it's an important one. It's only about a page and a half long in both French and English, but nonetheless I think it's an incredibly important piece of legislation. It recognizes that part of our heritage as a province over the centuries and today is in the fishing and hunting parts of Ontario. It deals with a lot of important issues. This is very import-

ant in the tourist trade, not just in southern Ontario but across northern Ontario.

There is a concern that as we change as a province, as we change as a society, those values that surround fishing and hunting will change with them, and that's why we want to come forward as a government and present this legislation.

This legislation was presented by my colleague John Snobelen, the former Minister of Natural Resources, and has been a very big priority of my colleague the Honourable Jerry Ouellette to ensure that this House gets the opportunity to vote on this important piece of legislation.

We have, as I mentioned in the point of order, had a rather significant amount of debate on what is not a gigantic piece of legislation. As I mentioned earlier, we've had three full days of debate, more than seven hours. Mr Hodgson has spoken to the bill, and Mr O'Toole, Mrs Johns, Mr Wetzlauer, Mr Sterling, Mr Stewart, Mr Ouellette, Mr Barrett, Mr Baird; for the opposition, Mr Parsons, Ms Di Cocco, Mr Peters, Mr Bryant, Mr Conway, Mr Bisson, the critic for the New Democratic Party and my good friend the leader of the third party, Mr Hampton.

As I was listening to the debates, and I was here for most of them, I think all members of this House are supporting the bill. I think the New Democratic Party is supporting it in principle.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: There may be one Liberal member who votes against the bill, I've just heard. I say with some caution that I remember the last time a member of the Liberal Party voted against his leader, and he's no longer here, nor is he on the district health council, for that matter.

Mr McGuinty did not like members of the Liberal Party daring to vote against him. When Alex Cullen voted against McGuinty—Dalton McGuinty and his office run things like it was a culture of fear. They kicked him out of the party and kicked him out of the nomination in his own constituency. The NDP took him in because they wanted to help the homeless, so they gave him a political home in the New Democratic Party.

He ran in the constituency of Ottawa-West Nepean. I represented 50% of that constituency in the last Parliament and I could tell you that they were not going to vote NDP in Nepean, and they didn't. But to Mr Cullen's credit, he got his deposit back. Mr Guzzo got elected, so I suppose we should give Mr Cullen a word of thanks.

I will be watching with great interest to see how my colleague from Ottawa Centre votes in the Legislature if his leader wants to stand up and vote for this bill, because we have certainly heard a good number of Liberals speak in favour of this bill, not just from the north but from southern Ontario. I look forward with great interest. I do think, though, it's safe to say that given the number of speeches we've had in this place, the Liberal Party members, a good majority of them, indicated their support for the bill.

We debated the bill for quite a long period of time. It was brought in in November. This is the type of bill I don't think we should have debated for as long as we have because there are other, more important pieces of legislation. I think it's regrettable on all sides. I'm not going to point fingers. It is regrettable that we don't have more negotiations on the government side and on the opposition side to be able to have more time on those issues that might be more important and less time on those issues that are rather more straightforward and where there would be more widespread support and agreement.

I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak on Bill 135 at second reading and to talk about how important I believe angling is to Ontario, not just from a heritage perspective but from a tourist perspective. I indicated that I am a fisherman and that I taught Will Stewart everything he knows about fishing, but I didn't teach him everything I know about fishing, in case he's watching.

This is an important piece of legislation. I think an essential part of the debate, not just in this place but around the province, is that you have a discussion about the pros and cons, but then you've got to make a decision and stand up and be counted. The motion we're putting forward—we'll have a full day this afternoon to debate—is to ask the House to move on to the next stage of the bill, which is to make a decision and to move forward. I want to indicate my strong support for the piece of legislation that's before us. I will be voting for it. I think the motion we have before us is quite reasonable.

Since this bill was tabled, Mr Chrétien has fired from his cabinet Mr Tobin, Ms Minna, Ms Fry, Mr Eggleton, Mr Gray, Mr Duhamel, Mr Gagliano and Mr Martin. You can see we practically have an entirely new federal cabinet since this legislation was first introduced into the House.

1630

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Did you hope to be in it?

Hon Mr Baird: The member for Timmins-James Bay asked if I hoped to be in it. I waited for the call to become Minister of Finance, but I didn't get the call.

At this time, I would like to congratulate the Honourable Paul Martin for his tenure as Minister of Finance. I feel very badly, as I think many people do right across Ontario and the whole country, about the way he was treated. He performed exceptionally well and he should be congratulated. We should say that on a non-partisan basis. I would like to put that on the record at the conclusion of this debate.

I look forward to moving on to the rest of this debate on this important motion. I look forward to having an opportunity to render a judgment on this important piece of legislation at second and third readings. I look forward to the benefits that will flow from the passage by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario of this important piece of legislation.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): We will be opposing the time allocation motion. That is be-

cause, as the member would know, this subverts all the normal rules and procedures that would go forward through this Legislature. I say that in spite of the fact that we believe this bill to be one that we will support; we've been very clear. As a matter of fact, in December the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane asked this House if it would give this piece of legislation second and third reading on unanimous consent. Unanimous consent was not available. Under the rules, that meant we would have to proceed through debate, thereby delaying the debate. But that should not mean that once we're in the debate the process should not be followed.

I would say to you this has to be absolute madness. My sense is much the same sense that has been stated by the chief government whip. I think all three parties support this. Am I right on that?

Mr Bisson: Yes.

Mr Brown: We have some amendments that my friend from Timmins-James Bay has suggested. Perhaps with some agreement we may have been able to incorporate them this afternoon in unanimous consent. We may have been able to do the whole thing this afternoon. Instead, we're back to having this just shoved down our throats. If we have any respect for democracy, this can't possibly happen.

For those members of the public who are watching this debate, you should know what this act says. You can read this whole act in three minutes. It says it is An Act to recognize Ontario's recreational hunting and fishing heritage and to establish the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission.

The really important part of this act is the preamble. The preamble is what really counts, because this bill is about symbolism; it isn't about a whole lot more. But sometimes symbolism is important. It says, "Recreational hunting and fishing have played important roles in shaping Ontario's social, cultural and economic heritage. Recreational hunters and anglers have made important contributions to the understanding, conservation, restoration and management of Ontario's fish and wildlife resources. The best traditions of recreational hunting and fishing should be valued by future generations." That is what is important in this act. The clauses really aren't.

This is what the first clause, on the right to hunt and fish, says: "A person has a right to hunt and fish in accordance with the law." I think I have that right today. I will have that right tomorrow. I will have that right into eternity. If I obey the law, I can hunt or fish. It doesn't change anything.

While I'm on the subject, I think we should outlaw the word "right" in bills, because this Legislature has no ability to make rights. We can make laws, but we cannot make rights. Only by amending the Charter of Rights and Freedoms can we possibly actually convey a right. That would take, depending on the amending formula that would apply, seven of 10 provinces with over 50% of the population, blah, blah, blah—not an easy thing to do. So we should not give people the impression we're giving them a right when in fact all we're saying is they have to obey the law.

Do you know what the second part does? It creates a commission. And you know what? The difference here is that after the bill is passed it will be a commission; today it's a board. Wow, that's pretty dramatic.

So I think we have to understand that the operative clauses of the bill are really not very operative. But it is important to recognize that hunting and fishing is part of our heritage. That's why the preamble is the most important part of the bill and the part that I think has members in this House supporting it.

Mr Speaker, I represent Algoma-Manitoulin, one of the larger ridings in the province of Ontario, which I know you've had the opportunity to visit on occasion. You were very nearby last week, I understand. It is a riding where hunting and fishing is part of the culture. On Manitoulin Island the deer hunt in November is pretty close to a national holiday. I see the member for Brampton Centre; he knows. Christmas on Manitoulin is almost as big an event as the deer hunt. It is part of the heritage of the place. It is something that people on Manitoulin are especially interested in. As a matter of fact, people from all across the province are very interested in it. The same could be said for places like Dubreuilville, Horne-payne, Chapleau, Thessalon, Bruce Mines and Manitouwadge. These are outdoor communities. They like to fish and they like to hunt.

Like some of my northern colleagues, one of the biggest constituency problems I face every year is moose tags. In the 1990 election, I had a constituent run down the street after me, following me all the way, yelling, "I'll never vote for you, Brown. You didn't get me a moose tag."

Mr Bisson: You should have given him one of the moose tags you have in your drawer.

Mr Brown: You have them?

These are big issues in a large, rural riding.

I want to talk for just a minute about some of the bigger issues. How would this bill affect the decisions around bear management in this province? What would this bill do? I understand that the Premier of Ontario is committed to a public review of the bear hunt decision. I've written to the Minister of Natural Resources asking that the good new minister tell us who will be on the panel for the review, where the public might go to make presentations, which biology will in fact be talked about as they review that decision. Because in my constituency, and all across northern Ontario and in many parts of southern Ontario, bear management has been downloaded to municipalities. They might be able to deal with raccoons or squirrels, but having a big mother bear in the backyard is a different sort of thing. We believe the Ministry of Natural Resources needs to deal with bears; not municipalities, who just don't have the resources, the capability, the expertise. The ministry should have to deal with such animals. It's a very dangerous situation, and we've been asking the government to upload this responsibility for quite some time.

The second issue I might ask about is, how would this bill affect cormorants? Cormorants are found by the

angling community to be an increasingly large problem to our fishery and to our land base. Some months ago in my constituency I attended a meeting in Espanola of over 50 people who were representing fish and game clubs and others from across our section of northern Ontario, and I think there were even people from down south of Parry Sound, who were very concerned that we are not in any way, shape or form managing the cormorant population, and therefore cormorants are destroying large land bases.

1640

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): You're right on.

Mr Brown: I see the member from Essex down there saying, "You're right on."

They're destroying Pelee Island, they destroyed Middle Island and they're going to destroy others. They are destroying fish populations. They are doing a great deal of harm, and we have no real management program for those particular birds.

Those birds are here in great numbers because of man. Men made some decisions in the southern United States that have meant we have more than our share of cormorants in the world. I know my friend Mr Ouellette is carefully looking at that, and hopefully he will be doing something about it. But there's nothing in this bill that will help those folks. This bill, though, has some value in terms of its symbolism. We will obviously be supporting the ability to fish and hunt according to the law, but the government should not be moving closure today, because it's madness.

Today we have the government asking the opposition to give unanimous consent to pass a bill dealing with Hydro compensation. I just looked in my desk, and the bill doesn't exist. I can't find it; it's not there. It hasn't even been printed, and the government expects some opposition, any opposition, to pass a Hydro bill without us even having it in our desks to be able to understand what it says. They're crazy. They could have introduced it, and we could have been talking about it this afternoon.

Interjection.

Mr Brown: My whip is saying that maybe I've taken enough time. But I want to assure the House that we will be opposing this motion, even though we support the bill.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): If it's Wednesday, it must be time allocation day. Here we go yet again. It was the same thing last Wednesday. As I mentioned to the House last Wednesday when I spoke on that time allocation motion, it was the same thing in the last session. My colleague Tony Martin and I, who do House duty on Wednesday afternoons, noticed that almost every single Wednesday in the last session, the government used its majority to shut down debate.

The reason I'm very concerned about this is because New Democrats have made it clear that we do think Bill 135 should go to committee for some consideration and some amendments, and we've been very upfront about that from the beginning. We stated our case with respect to that even at the time the bill was introduced on November 17.

I listened with curiosity to the government whip today saying this was a very important piece of legislation. I'd like to remind the government that they didn't introduce it for first reading until November 17, and then they didn't call it again. It was so important to the government, in terms of being a priority piece of legislation, that after it was introduced for first reading, it went into the black hole. I think that should say something to those people out there who hope the government is committed to fishing and hunting in this province.

I listened to government members last week tell us that this bill enshrines—and I want to use that word directly—forever the right to hunt and fish. The government holds this legislation up as a bill that would meet the needs of anglers and hunters. The problem is that the bill does nothing to enshrine or guarantee people's rights to hunt and fish. Frankly, I don't think it does very much to meet the needs of most anglers and hunters who have very serious and very legitimate concerns about both their access to natural resources and the allocation of natural resources. Their very legitimate and very serious concerns are not dealt with anywhere in Bill 135.

That is why we felt the government should send this bill to committee, so we could have an open and frank discussion about those legitimate and serious concerns. We could use the bill as an opportunity to try to have that discussion and then to have amendments moved so that we actually might meet the legitimate concerns of those people who hunt and fish and we might really enshrine their right to do so.

I don't think the anglers and hunters in my riding really want to be part of a snow job that is now being perpetrated by the government. I don't think they're interested at all in a public relations exercise that's designed to make them feel good but doesn't do anything to address their very serious concerns about natural resources, and the allocation of and access to those.

That is why I continue to say to the government today it is not too late. There are several amendments that could be put, amendments which I think would actually address the real, legitimate and serious concerns that anglers and hunters have with respect to our natural resources. I encourage the government to go through that process if they are interested in and intent on somehow enshrining a right to hunt and fish in law in this province.

I want to give three examples of why I say there should be hearings and why I think the government, if they were truly interested in enshrining some kind of right, could do so with amendments to this bill.

The first has to do with the government's proclamation of slot sizes. Early in January of this year this government proclaimed, unilaterally, slot sizes in most of northern Ontario, certainly in my part of northern Ontario. There was no consultation whatsoever; it was just proclaimed. People out there who are looking at this bill and hearing the government say, "You have a right to hunt and fish," look at the government's unilateral proclamation of slot sizes and say, "Just how far does my right really extend?"

I'm not denying that there may well be some very good reasons for conservation and some very good reasons to implement slot sizes. But when the government moves forward unilaterally, with no consultation whatsoever, without talking to the angling community and without providing the angling community with information and evidence from MNR biologists about why there have to be slot sizes, that really puts into question in people's minds just what their rights are and how far those rights extend.

If the government is serious about enshrining some kind of rights, they would also be putting into this bill some kind of process whereby there can be some legitimate discussion between the angling community and the government about why there may be a need for conservation, on what lakes, what the slot sizes are supposed to be and what the evidence is that would provoke MNR to move in that direction. But that didn't happen in January in northern Ontario. All that happened was a government announcement—better to say a government proclamation—that "This is the way it shall be." I tell you, that doesn't do anything to further your interests with respect to the angling community. It doesn't do anything to convince people they have some rights and they have an opportunity to exercise those rights.

On the contrary, unilateral declarations like that one, with no input, no consultation and no providing of the research or the evidence from MNR to show why it's necessary as a conservation exercise, sends people the wrong message and makes them concerned once again about their true and legitimate ability to access natural resources in the province.

The second issue has to do with moose tags. I remember, when this government was elected, they were going to fix the moose tag lottery. They were going to make it fair; they were going to make sure people got an opportunity to get a moose tag on a regular basis; they were going to do it all.

Do you know what? I was at a meeting last week and one of my constituents said to me, "You know, my dad hasn't been able to get a moose tag for the last eight years." That is not uncommon. There are many members in this Legislature who know that every year we get calls from constituents who have been unable to get a moose tag for three, five, six, eight years.

This government hasn't done anything to deal with that issue. I raise this in the context of Bill 135 because I heard government members say last week that this bill enshrines people's right to hunt and fish. If you can't get a moose tag, it's hard to believe that you have a right to hunt in Ontario. If, year after year, year in and year out, you apply to the lottery and you don't get a tag, it's hard to believe the government can tell you that you have a right to hunt and fish and it's enshrined in Bill 135. It leaves a bad taste in people's mouths.

1650

The other problem is it's not good enough to tell constituents, "There may be too many applications in this particular management unit, but if you look at another

management unit, you might get a tag." The problem with that is that in most cases it's very far away in northern Ontario to actually allow people to do that. It's really difficult to tell people from northeastern Ontario, for example, that they are unlucky and can't get a tag, but if they only go to a management unit in northwestern Ontario they might be able to hunt. You know what? It's a long way away from Sudbury to go and hunt in Nakina. It's very expensive, it's very costly, it's a long way to go and most people in northeastern Ontario already have a hunt camp in one of the surrounding local management units. That's where they want to go and hunt and that's where they've been hunting for a number of years.

So I say to the government, you could have used this opportunity to have some public hearings, to put some amendments and to actually tell the folks what you were going to do about the moose tag draw, because you cannot convince people who have been shut out of that process for four and five and eight years that they somehow have a right to hunt. You just can't convince them of that if they can't even get a tag, year after year, to allow them to actually do that.

The third issue I want to raise has to do with restrictions on motorized access to a number of lakes. There are two examples I want to raise in particular. Last May in Gogama there was a notice posted on the Pineland-Martel forest access road—no relation to me. Three different notices went up over about a three-week period, notices posted by the MNR that essentially said that use of this road to gain access to the following tourism lakes—and seven of them were listed—was now prohibited, that use of access by motorized vehicle was now prohibited.

The second notice said the same thing, that use of roads 166, 213, 403 to gain access to the following designated tourism lakes, and they're all listed, is prohibited by motorized vehicle access, and for further information call the MNR.

Then there was a third notice. One was put up and taken down; a second was put up and taken down. The third one said that Domtar Forest Resources is giving notice of road closure at kilometre 44 and it goes on to say that this is all done under a particular section of the Public Lands Act.

I raise this because I immediately got calls from a number of people, not only from Gogama but from Chelmsford and Valley East in my riding, people who had traditionally, year after year, gone to fish in those lakes and had used all-terrain vehicles in the summer to do so and had gone up on snowmobiles in the winter. Now the MNR, without any consultation, had posted notices saying motorized access along that road to those lakes was now being restricted. Essentially the only way you could get in to fish in those lakes was to walk in or try and canoe in by an alternative route.

That's ridiculous because some of those lakes are far too far away for the people of Gogama to walk into. A number of those lakes are impossible to canoe into. So they came to see me to say, "How was this decision

arrived at? We received no consultation whatsoever. No notice was posted except the notice on the road when we went in to start to fish. That was the only consultation we had: here's the way it's going to be."

After a very long process involving freedom of information requests and discussions with MNR, we got a fair bit of information back. I specifically wrote to the government and said, "I want all correspondence, e-mails, memos, anything you have between the minister's office and the local MNR about how this decision was arrived at."

One of the things MNR provided to me was a committee meeting of the LCC, the local citizens' committee, in Gogama, whereby the MNR seemed to suggest that it was the local citizens' committee in Gogama that had actually made this decision. They were outraged. They were incensed. They called me back and said, "We remember this issue coming before us in April. The MNR talked to us about a particular policy with respect to access to tourism lakes. They didn't ask for input. They didn't ask if we agreed. In fact, we told them we didn't. There was certainly no vote and we are very unhappy now that the government is somehow using this minute from this particular meeting of the local citizens' committee to somehow justify the decision that was made."

You know what? They were right, because there was no vote. They specifically told the MNR they didn't want motorized vehicle access to be restricted on those lakes.

At the end of the day, when we went through all of the information that the government had given, the government was relying on land use policies from 1984 to justify the decision to cut off motorized vehicle access to these seven lakes. You know what? Some of the people who have been in Gogama who were around in 1984 in the development of those plans also told me there was no discussion in 1984 either with respect to cutting off motorized access to those lakes. So they feel very strongly, and well they should, that they had no input. You tell these people in Gogama today that this government is giving them a right to fish under Bill 135 and they'll laugh. They laugh because they say, "We can't even access those lakes any more. We can't access them as we previously did on our all-terrain vehicles or on our snowmobiles, we can't walk in there because it's too far and we can't canoe using some alternate route to many of those lakes because the access is just not there."

A second example—because it's not just my riding—when the committee that was dealing with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act actually met in Sudbury, we had a group from West Nipissing who came to talk about this very issue and said the following: "New regulations by the Ministry of Natural Resources that would exclude all motorized vehicles except snowmobiles will discriminate against the elderly and the disabled who must use a truck to get to their fishing or hunting site." In the case of West Nipissing, snowmobiles were being allowed; I should make that point. The group went on to say—and this is Mr Alfred Levac, who is from Sturgeon Falls—"If this

regulation takes effect, it will make it virtually impossible for the elderly or the disabled to enjoy their traditional rights of hunting and fishing."

You know what? I agree with Mr Alfred Levac about the case in West Nipissing, just as I agree with my constituents in Nickel Belt who were and remain very concerned that they can't access those seven lakes, lakes that they used to access for years and years with their families. If the government truly wanted to enshrine rights to hunt and fish, the government would deal with this issue, because you can't tell those people that they have a right when they know full well that they can't access those lakes.

In conclusion, my colleague from Timmins-James Bay will be moving an amendment that will again call on the government to have some time to move amendments. I think this is one that should be dealt with if you are truly interested in telling anglers and hunters out there that they do have some rights with respect to hunting and fishing in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member from Brampton Centre.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): Thank you, Speaker.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): How many moose do you have in your riding?

Mr Spina: But I came from further north than you did.

Having been born and raised in northern Ontario, I very much empathize with the comments made by our colleagues from northern Ontario, the member from Timmins-James Bay, the member from Nickel Belt and certainly the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, who lives very close to where I grew up. I recognized every name and have been to pretty well most places that he indicated. Growing up, particularly in northern Ontario, but even in all of Ontario when it comes to fishing, we all have a great appreciation for what this province's heritage is with respect to fishing. With respect to hunting, it generally takes place in central and northern Ontario, and those from southern Ontario who are hunters, like many in my own riding, generally travel extensively.

This bill, as has been indicated by many parties, really supports the diverse array of fish and wildlife species and the right of people to hunt and fish. There is a board, as the member indicated earlier, that is now going to become a commission. They will advise the minister on the various issues that the minister should be addressing. But this bill wasn't just created willy-nilly out of the blue. It was really created out of a request from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, who wanted to ensure that the right to hunt and fish, even though it was kind of an expected right—but there are things that turn up over the years, regulations or bills, pieces of legislation or somebody's arbitrary rules, that often can impinge on that.

1700

I remember full well what the member for Nickel Belt, I think, was alluding to earlier, when we went through the Bill 101 process on the snowmobile sustainability act. We encountered some very strong positions put forward to us from anglers and hunters regarding the right to traditional trails in this province. We weren't able to address it at the time, but it has been addressed since. I'm very pleased to be able to say that an agreement was reached with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to permit the use of traditional trails for snowmobiling in the winter.

It seems almost ironic, because if anybody knows anything about hunting in the winter, there isn't a whole lot of it, unless you go rabbit hunting, which is open year-round. But there is very little occasion, with the exception of the far north, where you would be using a snowmobile to go hunting.

Mr Bisson: It would be hard to shoot a rabbit from the back of a snow machine.

Mr Spina: My friend from Timmins-James Bay is terrific. I always like talking to him about stuff from northern Ontario, except that he has a plane and I don't. Somehow you earned the money and found the time to get a licence, Gilles. I really like that; that's very good.

Mr Bisson: Nothing's too good for the working class.

Mr Spina: It's nice to be in opposition and not have to commit a lot of time to this job. I don't know.

I found the comments made by some of the other members criticizing this bill a little strange. They want more time for debate. What are we debating here, the right to fish? No, nobody argues that, really. Are we debating the right to hunt? Nobody argues that. What we're trying to do is look at the responsibilities that would be put in with the creation of a Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission. If I can take a second, I just wanted to touch on the points in subsection 2(3) of the bill, which talks about responsibilities. It says:

"On the request of the Minister of Natural Resources, the commission shall consider and make recommendations to the minister on the following matters:

"The promotion of practices that will contribute to recreational hunting and fishing being valued by future generations." There's nothing to argue here. I don't think there's anybody who disagrees with that issue.

"The promotion of public participation in fish and wildlife conservation programs." I don't think anybody would argue with that.

"The promotion of youth participation in hunting, fishing and other fish and wildlife activities." I don't think anybody argues with that either.

"The promotion of tourism.... The promotion of new opportunities.... The design and establishment of a mechanism to finance matters referred to" in the paragraphs on public participation, promotion of youth, tourism etc.

All of those elements are part of the responsibilities that are set out in subsection 2(3) of this bill. I don't know anybody who would really want to argue with that. The one criticism that was levelled in the previous

debate, before the time allocation was brought in, was the fact that it did not address the rights of aborigines. The rights of aborigines are very clearly defined in the federal laws. So there is no question; it's laid down in statute. We are really trying to develop a parallel here and to lay down a statute that essentially enshrines that right to hunt and fish for the rest of the citizens of Ontario.

I got a chuckle out of the member for St Paul's the other day, when he talked about having his thumb bitten by muskie. I rather chuckled at that.

Mr Bisson: How the hell do you do that?

Mr Spina: Anybody who's a fisherman, or has somebody who knows something around him, knows that the first thing you do is hit it with a fish bat if it's a muskie, for Pete's sake. You only stick your thumb in the mouth of a bass in order to get the hook out of it. Anybody who has done any fishing would know—

Mr Brown: Or a trout.

Mr Spina: Or a trout; that's true. But it's with the smaller game fish that you do that. You don't do it with a muskie. So I rather chuckled. But it was a memorable experience for the member for St Paul's. So maybe he'll have the opportunity to learn that as an adult or with his children as they get older.

The member for Nickel Belt started talking about slot sizes. Why did this government impose slot sizes? Should we remind her that her husband was the Minister of Natural Resources when they were in government? Slot sizes are necessary to be implemented when certain sizes of fish are in danger of being depleted. Therefore, you have to identify, for conservation reasons, certain lakes and streams and particular sizes of fish that have to be limited in the amount that can be caught, and where. The member for Nickel Belt makes it sound as if this has been an arbitrary decision. It's not an arbitrary decision.

She also asked the question about what would happen here and who is going to be doing the study, and the issues on the bear hunt: who's doing the biological study on those kinds of issues? The Ministry of Natural Resources. They are the expert, highly paid people of this government ministry who are expected to be able to provide that sort of information and analysis and make recommendations to the minister to be able to be implemented so we can act in a conservationist manner.

Last, regarding the moose tags, we've all had calls, even those of us in southern Ontario. Having been born and raised in the Soo, I know what they were all about. I was a little taken aback when one of my own constituents in Brampton came to me and said, "I can't get a moose tag. I haven't had one for four or five years." We understand that. You know what? I agree with you that the whole moose tag and deer licence issue ought to be addressed to make it a fairer system.

Mr Bisson: Was it Danny Rankin?

Mr Spina: No.

However, I found that hunters tend to be extremely resourceful. The constituents I mentioned came to me and said, "Look, we all apply for moose tags and usually

one or two or three might get it." It's always a mix between a bull or a cow. So they go hunting together and then they share the kill.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): How do you share a kill?

Mr Spina: Obviously, someone who has the licence is permitted to take the animal and the rest share in cutting it up, taking it out of the bush and that sort of thing. That's what we mean by share the kill. Thank you to the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I'm going to keep quiet now because I've got to leave some time for my honourable friend the member for Peterborough, who knows and lives and whose constituency is the heart of the Federation of Anglers and Hunters. He's as good a fisher of people and hunter of men as I've ever met. Don't forget—we try to ignore that phrase, which I think some Liberal brought forward many years ago, which said people think of Canada as drawers of water and hewers of wood, and we're more than that; we like to hunt and fish too.

1710

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Since we're dealing with a time allocation motion, I'm going to devote my remarks this afternoon to the lack of wisdom of invoking time allocation in this House. It's a subject I have talked about on many occasions. Since they tell me there's a new Premier with a new attitude, I always hope that perhaps he will change the rules, to not invoke these kinds of time allocation motions.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: My colleague from Kingston and the Islands says we're seeing just as many as ever.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): This one is even worse.

Mr Bradley: This one apparently is even worse because there's no third reading debate. That's something I find astounding, that there would be no third reading debate on a bill with the importance of this piece of legislation.

What we have to understand is the reason we're into time allocation motions, and that is because the government refused to bring the Legislature back into session much earlier in the year. A lot of people were appalled when I told them—they didn't read it in the news media, certainly—that the Legislature had last sat in the middle of December 2001 and then was reconvened in the middle of May 2002. They said, "It can't be that the House hasn't sat for five full months. Do you mean to tell me you people were not in the Legislative chamber during that period of time?" I had to tell them that was indeed the case.

I said, "If that happened in Ottawa, there would be an uproar of the kind that you would never believe." The National Post and the Toronto Sun—who else would we have?—Mike Duffy, CFTO, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, the Ottawa Citizen, which is so independent in its approach to political issues, all those papers would be up in arms if the federal government had announced it was not bringing the House back into session until May.

Here, apparently, nobody cares about that. I was looking through the columns the other day at what columnists had written, and I said, "Maybe there was a column I missed somewhere along the line that said the House hasn't sat." I couldn't find it. Then I started to go through old tapes to see if maybe somebody in a newscast had said the House hadn't sat for five months. Alas, no matter where I went in the news media looking for something that would be a glaring headline story in Ottawa if the federal Liberals had done this, I couldn't find it. And, alas, when I was reading a column last weekend in the Toronto Star—the good friend of the government—the columnist happened to say, "It's harder to raise these issues. You know what they're raising in Ottawa? Well, they don't get raised here because there are not enough staff and resources and people don't tend to aim at the provincial government."

I keep thinking, "I would bet dollars to doughnuts that the government has steered contracts of the advertising variety to its friends." If only someone would ask, as they're going into the government caucus room or going into the cabinet room, "Have you ever steered one of these advertising contracts to one of your friends?" or perhaps, "When the government gave you such a huge contract for advertising, a \$6-million or \$7-million contract, does that mean then that when the Conservative Party is asking for advertising, they get a break on the price?"

I don't know that to be the case, Mr Speaker. You may be in a better position to know than I. I don't know that to be the case. But nobody ever asks. I get puzzled when I see the feeding frenzy in Ottawa, and I see the people in Queen's Park just toddle along and apparently get away with that kind of stuff.

So I ask the question rhetorically in this House, and my friend the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities may have the answer. She may be able to help me out after my remarks are finished.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): We've suffered together.

Mr Bradley: She says we've suffered together, so we would know that.

But I digress, and the Speaker is so very tolerant of allowing digression when we are talking about a time-allocation motion. He's most understanding of the parameters of such a motion.

I think it's unfortunate that we cannot spend the appropriate amount of time on bills of great import and that we cannot decide, as three parties, what shall go through relatively quickly and what shall receive a full debate. That's a procedural question.

I remember as well that the government on at least two occasions has changed the rules of this House. We simply don't have the same kind of accountability we once had. The House now sits day and night. I don't object to that. What I object to is that the government gets to count two days in its debate, the afternoon being one day and the evening being another day. They get what I call "two for one"—one question period, and they get two days when you are asked, as Speaker, sometimes

to rule on how long a debate has gone on and we look at how many days it's been, the government can use one day for two days, and they've essentially taken away all the bargaining chips the opposition has.

I thought the Liberal House leader made a very good point today about moving a piece of legislation that the government now wants to move quickly. He said, "I've got a couple of conditions that I think are reasonable." He got up for unanimous consent, and the government said no. They did not want to deal with those conditions. They were not onerous conditions, I thought. They were quite reasonable. They certainly would brighten the issue and enlighten people about the issue of Hydro, but they were turned down. The government said, "No, we simply want you to pass second and third readings on our latest bill quickly, no debate and no conditions."

I think the House functions best when there's some give and take, when the opposition could say, "Here are a couple of conditions that we think would be reasonable," and the government could then say, "That's fine; we agree with those," and then we will all proceed. Instead, we get a confrontation, we get histrionics on all sides of the House and there is much more heat than light generated as a result.

So I must oppose the time allocation motion. I have always opposed time allocation motions in principle. In government—behind cabinet doors, if I can reveal it now—I opposed time allocation motions when they were proposed. But they were so infrequent in those days that when one was applied you felt it was probably justified.

Mr Speaker, you would know that there was a time when there was no limit on the speeches in this Legislature, and that was rather interesting to see. Some people could speak for two and three hours and be compelling; others might not be as compelling after eight minutes. I think I've gone eight minutes at the present time, and I really feel a compulsion to yield some further time to my colleague. I think the NDP is ready to speak now as well, so I'll sit down.

Mr Bisson: I just want to set out that my cousin, Danny Rankin, has his wonderful member over here who represents him, but there's only one problem. It's the wrong party. Cross over and sit with us New Democrats, and Danny would be much more comfortable.

We're debating a time allocation motion on the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act. The effect of the motion is to say there will be no time for members such as myself to present amendments to deal with various aspects of this bill that we think need to be dealt with, and there will be no debate at third reading.

Before I start, I want to move an amendment to the original motion.

I move that the motion be amended by striking out the third and fourth paragraphs of the motion as it appears on the orders and notices paper, and substituting the following:

"At such time, the bill be ordered referred to the committee of the whole House, and that one hour be allotted to this stage, at the expiry of which the Chair of the committee of the whole House shall interrupt the pro-

ceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto and report the bill to the House;

"That, upon receiving the report of the committee of the whole House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

"That the order for third reading may be immediately called and that 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, to be divided equally among all recognized parties, and at the end of that time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and"

The reason I put forward this amendment is very simple. I have three amendments that are very straightforward that I want to put to this legislation. I believe they are amendments that the government probably wants to support, and I know that we, as New Democrats, and the Liberals support these amendments.

The problem I've got, because of this time allocation motion, is that the government is not allowing us to put forward any amendments. The purpose of this is very simple. We'll allow the government to get this bill in the same amount of time that they would with their own time allocation motion. The only difference is that we would be allowed to get into committee of the whole and we would be allowed to introduce the amendments and to vote on them.

1720

The amendments are fairly straightforward. There are three. I'll deal with the first one. The first one deals with the composition of the commission. In the bill there are two sections. Section 2 says that where there used to be a committee to advise the minister on various issues having to do with angling and hunting, you now have a commission. What I want to do by way of an amendment is to give structure to who will sit on that commission so we see that there is proper representation. I would move, in committee of the whole, the following amendment to Bill 135:

"Subsection (2.1)

"I move that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Same

"(2.1) In appointing members of the commission, the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall ensure that an equal number of members is appointed from each of the following classes of persons:

"1. representatives of recreational hunters and anglers;

"2. representatives of environmental organizations;

"3. biologists employed by universities in Ontario who work in the field of biology related to natural resources."

The reason we're moving that is very simple. We want to make sure the minister doesn't put just one group of

people on this commission. We don't want just environmentalists, we don't want just biologists, we don't want just MNR staff or just anglers. We want to make sure that when we're dealing with issues there is a balance on that committee to deal with them properly.

The second amendment we want to put forward is non-contentious amendment. It's very simple. This speaks to the concerns of First Nations communities. I represent a riding that has a large number of First Nations communities throughout the riding. Nishnawbe-Aski Nation along with Mushkegowuk Council, Matawa Tribal Council and the Chiefs of Ontario have asked me to move a motion that is basically a non-derogation clause. I believe that the way the bill is written it doesn't confer any new rights to anybody and, as such, aboriginal rights to hunting, fishing and trapping are not affected by this bill; and I have had that confirmed by the ministry. But First Nations leaders in this province are asking for an amendment. I think as a government-to-government relationship that we're supposed to have with First Nations, we should support this amendment. The amendment would be very simple. It would read as follows:

"Section 2.2

"I move that the bill be amended by adding the following section:

"Aboriginal rights

"2.2 This act does not abrogate, derogate from or add to any aboriginal treaty right that is recognized and affirmed by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982."

The purpose of that is simple. It's a non-derogation clause. It's a no-brainer. We all agree that this current bill does not take away the right of aborigines to hunting, fishing or trapping. We say that. But we have the Chiefs of Ontario and various other leaders in the First Nations community of Ontario who say it does. So let's put our money where our mouth is. Accept our amendment to go into committee of the whole. You'll get the bill in the same amount of time and we will vote on this particular amendment.

I'm sure the government doesn't want to give an impression that it's taking rights from First Nations communities. I know that we don't want to accept that and neither do the Liberals. So I say to the government, this is for your own good. This is so the First Nations people can feel as if they've been respected in this process. After all, we did sign, under the Bob Rae government in 1990, a statement of political relationship with First Nations people to be dealt with on a government-to-government basis. This is a request from the Chiefs of Ontario. That is the highest level of representation of First Nations leadership in this province and they're asking us for a non-derogation clause. So allow my amendment to your time allocation motion to pass so we can get into committee of the whole and we can support that particular amendment.

The third amendment that I want is the one that really is the anglers and hunters issue, and it's very simple. Anglers and hunters are being told by this government that this bill confers on them new rights when it comes to

hunting and fishing. We have all spoken to this and said that is not the case. When I sat down for ministry briefings, when the ministry people briefed me, and when the minister's staff briefed me, they all said the same thing. "Under this bill, if you tried to cancel the spring bear hunt, could you have any effect?" The answer is no. "If you were to introduce slot sizes to fishing across the province, as they did in January, could anglers in any way change that decision?" No, they couldn't do that. "Do I have any new rights to go out and hunt or fish under this act?" The answer is no. So there are no new rights given by this bill.

I'm saying to the government, if you're trying to give something to anglers and hunters, let's put some teeth in this legislation. So I want to move an amendment and that's why I'm asking you to support, in my amendment to your time allocation motion, the following motion. It's a very simple one, a motion that would be moved in committee of the whole House on section 2.1, in my name. It says:

"I move that the bill be amended by adding the following section:

"Proposals affecting local communities

"2.1 If a local community would be affected by a proposal under consideration in the Ministry of Natural Resources that relates to recreational hunting or fishing or a matter referred to in subsection 2(3)"—that means all of those matters that the commissioner is supposed to deal with—"the Minister of Natural Resources shall ensure that:

"(a) a local citizens' committee established for the community under section 13 of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, is consulted, or, if none exists,

"(b) if there is no local citizens' committee established for the community under section 13 of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, other steps are taken to consult the community." In other words, they would have to form a committee.

The reason I want this is real simple. There's no way in heck that the provincial committee is going to be able to deal with all the issues across the province when it comes to angling and hunting. For example, what do we do if they shut down access? For example, my good friend Nick Fergassi, out of Timmins, has had areas that he and his family have hunted for generations closed to him for angling and hunting. He can't take motorized vehicles in there any more. He's been told he can't go. Under this new act the government is putting forward, that doesn't change anything. He still would get stuck. At least under what I'm proposing, the ministry, if they came to shut down a road, would have to go to the citizens' committee under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and advise them that they wish to do this. Then the local citizens' committee would have to turn their attention to the issue and then consult with the various people they represent at those committees. So people like Nick Fergassi, Roger Cauchon and Pio Alberton, and the list goes on, would at least find out what is going on and have the ability to affect the

decision, because at this point there's no obligation for the ministry to do anything.

I'm saying, in this particular case, we can't refer those matters up to a provincial committee that the government's creating under the commission because they will not be able to deal with all the individual things that happen across the province. God, they would be sitting 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and they still couldn't deal with it. So I'm saying refer all those things in the district to the local citizens' committee. Why? For example, when we had the cancellation of the spring bear hunt northerners were outraged, but they had no effective measure to be able to get at the government to change their position. At least with this amendment I'm putting forward, the government would have had to refer that decision to the local citizens' committees, and under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, those people would have had to turn their attention to it on that committee. People would have found out about it and we would have had the ability to affect the final outcome. Under the current structure of the bill, you couldn't do that. You have no new rights. At least this section gives you some rights.

The other reason I want to put it in is really, really simple. My good friend Roger Cauchon, who runs a sporting store in the community of Timmins, is extremely frustrated with the Ministry of Natural Resources—as he calls it, "the ministry of no response"—on a number of issues that affect him and affect anglers and hunters across the province. He tries to deal with the ministry on a number of decisions and he feels stymied. He feels as if he's not being listened to. He says, "Listen, my business is being taken away." With all of these new regulations and all the stuff that this government has done, he finds himself in a position where people are not fishing and hunting because of the restrictions. So he's saying that at the very least he needs to have some ability to affect the decision.

My amendment would speak to people like Roger. He would find out through his local citizens' committee, because I know he's well connected to the people there and there are people on that committee whom he has confidence in. He would be able to find out what's going on, have input in the process, be able to present to the local citizens' committee, and then there would have to be a recommendation from the committee to allow or not allow the Ministry of Natural Resources to do what they're doing.

People like Pio Alberton, who never got a moose tag in 15 years, at least under this proposal would have an opportunity to deal with that issue through the citizens' committee. He's complained to the ministry. He's complained to me, and he was a long-time supporter who was pretty mad at me for a number of years because he couldn't get a moose tag. At least under what I'm proposing, people like Pio would have a voice.

The bill as it is currently written would not do anything to deal with Pio Alberton's problem of getting a moose tag. At least this amendment would put teeth in

the legislation and it would say that people like Pio can go to the local citizens' committee, make their complaint to them, have them turn their attention to it and make a recommendation to the ministry as to what needs to be done. But you cannot have something happen where the ministry just does its own thing.

1730

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: OK. I thought you were trying to get my attention on something else. Very good. I already moved my amendment.

The last thing I want to say is that people in northern Ontario see through the trick the government's trying to pull here. The title of the bill purports to give anglers and hunters rights, but this bill gives absolutely no rights. I'm saying to the government that I'm prepared to support this legislation, but at least give it some teeth. Accept the amendments we're putting forward, especially the one around the local citizens' committees and around the issue of the non-derogation clause. At least that way we can speak to those constituents who will be affected by this bill.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Mr Speaker, I think it is very appropriate today to have you in the chair, as a very ardent, very resourceful and very conservation-oriented person who likes to fish. I don't know about the hunting, but you certainly like to fish. It is most appropriate that you would be in the chair listening to this—well, I can't use the word "debate." I hear that word "debate" a lot of times in this House and I sometimes think that many of us—I guess sometimes I have to include myself—stand up and we don't debate; we talk to hear ourselves talking. It was pretty evident when we heard the member from St Catharines talking about his digressing from what we are actually, supposedly talking about today. That seems to happen in his case a lot, the reason being he doesn't understand the bill and doesn't know anything about the bill. That bothers me a little bit.

I want to make a couple of comments to the speaker from Timmins-James Bay. I was in the House last week when he was talking to this bill. At that time he was talking about how this bill affected the aboriginal community. Today I understand, and I am pleased, that he got a briefing from MNR, because this bill does not affect the aboriginal community in any way at all. This act cannot—I want to emphasize "cannot"—supersede treaty rights. So I am pleased he got a briefing on that which now is suggesting to us that this will not have an effect on the aboriginal community.

The other amendment he wants to make is regarding the voice of the people and the various regions. I believe in that 100%. I am very supportive of our going out and talking to people across this province and getting their input. The voice of this type of legislation will be the commission. Let me assure you that I am quite sure the commission will be made up of stakeholders who are involved in the hunting and fishing community, the conservation community, full membership across the board, to make sure this type of legislation works well in years to come.

One of the things that impresses me very much about this bill is that finally there will be legislation—there is none now; you know it and I know it—that permits or enshrines—I know the member for Nickel Belt doesn't like that word—the right to hunt and fish, in accordance with the law.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): What about the Game and Fish Act?

Mr Stewart: It is not in legislation.

I think that's one of the keys to this piece of legislation. There was a suggestion by the member from Brampton Centre that this was a piece of legislation asked for by the Federation of Anglers and Hunters, which has a membership of 85,000, many of whom are hunters and fishermen. But this actually goes back to a meeting in Lindsay two or three years ago, where there were some 800 people, most of whom were hunters and fishermen, who requested—their right to do this recreational sport in the future might not continue. That was where this originated. They wanted to have it enshrined in law that they would have that right to hunt recreationally.

It was interesting when I also heard the member from, I guess it was Nickel Belt. If I listened to her about the moose hunt, we'd be throwing open the moose hunt and allowing everybody in Ontario to get a permit. If that's what she calls conservation, if that's what she calls scientific management of a resource, of conservation, then I'm sorry, I don't believe in that.

We have the various areas. Some areas get a larger number of tags. Why? Because there's a larger number of moose there. It's the same thing with the antlerless deer, the doe licences. I haven't had a doe licence for probably the last 10 years, for two reasons: the first reason being I never got my application in time in a few of them; and in the other ones I didn't apply. So again, you can't throw out a doe licence to every hunter in Ontario. If you do that, you are not going to in any way make sure that we have a sustainable resource in this province in the future.

I believe that with the implementation of hunter safety, the apprenticeship program where, yes, we allow young people, 12-year-olds, accompanied by a hunter one firearm to learn safety aspects, learn conservation, learn how to hunt and fish in a respectable manner—I want to use that word "respectable," that being respect for the wildlife that we have in this great province.

I believe that this legislation will lead to good, sound additional science-based management. I believe it will lead to additional education programs to make sure that we do not in any way jeopardize hunting and fishing in this province. And I believe that the hunters and fishermen continue to monitor the welfare of the wildlife and, indeed, their habitat.

You know, I made a comment the other night. Everybody seems to think the hunter and the fisherman is the guy who has the red hat with the peak on the back, sitting on the back of an old 150 Ford barrelling down the road. Do you know who those people are? They're the doctors, they're the lawyers, both male—

Mr Kormos: Damned lawyers.

Mr Stewart: That's what I wanted to say—both male and female. They are our next-door neighbours. They are mothers and fathers. They are grandmothers and grandfathers. Those are the people who represent the hunting and fishing community of this great province. I want to make sure that those are the people who believe in making sure this is a resource that is protected.

It's a social resource. Many of the hunt camps, the fishing camps—I happened to be at one last week, the Caledon Mountain Trout Club, a major family-oriented club where husbands and wives and family members go and have a social event, do some fishing and make it, as I said, into a family outing. Camps in the area where I am have major weekends where the wives are back, they go fishing, they go hunting. They have a major social and cultural evening.

The tourism—we've talked about the dollars that are coming into this province on a resource that we have to maintain.

As I said, I believe a great deal that in the future, with this type of legislation going through, the sustainability of our natural resource of wildlife will be protected. I also believe that those people are stewards of the land and of the forests and will make sure that it stays managed and as a resource, that my children and my grandchildren will be able to benefit and go and enjoy the outdoors in a recreational manner and do some hunting and fishing if they want to.

I cannot believe the allocation. It's ludicrous that we had to time-allocate this. This is a piece of legislation that is long overdue. It's a piece of legislation that I believe protects our wildlife and our fishing habitat. I believe it is long overdue and I can't for the life of me understand why people are sitting and blocking it.

1740

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I have only about two minutes to say what I want to say, so I want to reinforce the message to the anglers and hunters in my area of Sudbury in northern Ontario that I very much support Bill 135, and that there's absolutely no question in my mind that it's a good bill. It's a bill that is in accordance with the law, so I don't have some of the concerns that others do. I respect the concerns of others. But I want the people in my area of northern Ontario to know that I'm against time allocation motions because they stifle debate, and that's not fair.

I also want to say that in this instance, although I disagree with the members of the third party, I was prepared—in fact I sent a letter to the leader of the third party asking for unanimous consent to have this bill passed before Christmas. I make no apologies for that. I am still convinced it was the right thing to do then. This is a good bill. This bill will not take away the rights of others, so I say to anyone who's listening that I will be supporting Bill 135. I am very much in favour of the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act. But I do not agree with the government invoking time allocation, which stifles debate. In fact, I think we're going directly to third reading for support.

So as long as the hunters and fishermen in my area understand: thoroughly in support of Bill 135, no question; haven't deviated at all; don't like the government's antics of invoking time allocation.

Mr Gerretsen: I, too, want to add my voice on this situation, which is not, contrary to what was stated earlier by the parliamentary assistant, that we're here to debate the merits of the bill right now. We're here debating the time allocation motion this government has brought forward once again. For him to suggest this bill is somehow being held up by us is absolute nonsense. You, sir, are the government that is introducing time allocation, closure. You don't want any further debate. Nobody's blocking anything at all. You are in effect causing the debate to be shut down on this in its entirety.

I have talked about this issue many times in the past, but I will do so once again. From a study I had conducted by our legislative library during the intersession, let there be no mistake about it: the democracy in this Parliament is failing, and failing rapidly. Back during the Peterson government years—this is from this study—time allocation was introduced on exactly five out of 312 bills that were introduced during that period of time—exactly 2.1% of the time. During the Rae years, time allocation was introduced 11% of the time—18 out of 163 bills. But during the Harris-Eves years, on 191 bills, time allocation was invoked 86.4% of the time, on more than four out of five bills. This government has continually over the last seven years invoked closure whereby basically it's saying, "We don't want to hear from anybody any more."

In this particular motion, it gets even worse than that because, as has already been pointed out, there won't even be any third reading debate. There will be no way in which amendments to this bill, perhaps very reasonable amendments, can be introduced by any member. I'll read right from the motion. It states, "When the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment."

I would think, and I would hope, that the people of Ontario are simply outraged over that position. I know everybody thinks it's funny, but it's happening on a day-to-day basis, and then we wonder why politicians, why this process, why this Parliament, are held in such disrespect and disrepute by the people of Ontario.

How should things be handled? I'll give you an example of how they should be handled. Over the last three or four days we've had some very heavy questions and answers, or non-answers I should say, on this whole Hydro One situation. The government House leader has challenged us a number of times by saying, "We want to give Bill 80, which deals with the compensation packages of the senior executives at Hydro, second and third readings." The first time he asked for that was yesterday, about a minute and a half after he introduced the bill. Without having as much as a copy available to any member in the House, to any of the House leaders of the other two parties, he wanted us to pass the bill, and we

had absolutely no idea as to what the bill contained. He just wanted us to go on trust: "Here's the title of the bill. Now give it second and third readings."

I think the people of Ontario should know that our House leader today put a very simple request to the government House leader. I'll just read you his letter. He basically states:

"I write you with regard to Bill 80....

"The official opposition will grant unanimous consent for the second and third reading of the bill"—now that we've had an opportunity to see it over the last 24 hours—"under the following conditions," and they are the most reasonable conditions anybody could think of,

"(1) The House moves into committee of the whole to improve the bill by amending the freedom of information act to restore the successor companies of Ontario Hydro" to that act. In other words, we're saying that the freedom of information act should apply to the Ontario Hydro situation as it applies to all other government bills and situations in this province, and why shouldn't it? Why should Ontario Hydro not be subject to the freedom of information act?

Secondly, he states, "The government agree to introduce and pass a motion directing the committee on public accounts to conduct an immediate inquiry into executive compensation at the successor companies of Ontario Hydro," so that witnesses can be examined under oath, such as "Sir Graham Day, Eleanor Clitheroe, Ron Osborne, Jim Wilson, Chris Stockwell and, if necessary, Mike Harris and Ernie Eves."

What could one possibly have against those two conditions? Absolutely nothing. One is to apply the freedom of information act to the Ontario Hydro situation, and the second is so we can get all the principal actors in this scenario before a committee of this House to examine them under oath as to what really happened.

All I'm saying is, there are ways in which bills can be dealt with very effectively and very expeditiously in this House, but you have to give an opportunity to allow the opposition to bring in very reasonable amendments or conditions. I would urge the government House leader, now that he's had a chance to take a look at this letter, to change his mind and say that, yes, these two conditions set out by my House leader about the freedom of information act applying to the Ontario Hydro situation and about the committee to examine the individuals involved under oath are reasonable and should be included. Then we can pass this bill tomorrow, so that we can finally get down to the truth and the bottom of the Ontario Hydro situation.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Bisson has moved that the motion be amended by striking out the third and fourth paragraphs of the motion as it appears on the orders and notices paper, and substituting the following:

"At such time, the bill be ordered referred to the committee of the whole House, and that one hour be allotted to this stage, at the expiry of which the Chair of the committee of the whole House shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amend-

ment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto and report the bill to the House;

"That, upon receiving the report of the committee of the whole House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

"That the order for third reading may be immediately called and that 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, to be divided equally among all recognized parties, and at the end of that time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and"

All those in favour of the amendment? All those opposed?

Interjections.

1750

The Acting Speaker: Pardon me. I should have said, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

The Acting Speaker: Please take your seats. Mr Bisson has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 9. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley	
Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arrott, Ted	Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia
Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Emie	Mushinski, Marilyn
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
Chudleigh, Ted	Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John
Clark, Brad	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clement, Tony	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Coburn, Brian	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Martinuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Eves, Ernie	McDonald, Al	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Young, David

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 25; the nays are 45.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

Mr Baird has moved government notice of motion number 9. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1803 to 1813.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnett, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Brad	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Clement, Tony	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 44; the nays are 22.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being way past 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1816.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 5 June 2002

Mercredi 5 juin 2002



Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 juin 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RELIABLE ENERGY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA FIABILITÉ DE L'ÉNERGIE ET LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 4, 2002 on the motion for second reading of Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant certaines lois en ce qui concerne le secteur de l'énergie.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): When we left off, the leader of the third party, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, had the floor and was partway through his leadoff. We'll have that time continue now.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): When I was addressing this issue last night, I pointed out that we in the New Democrats had asked for a legal opinion from a trade lawyer to address the issue of Hydro privatization and deregulation in the context of the North American free trade agreement. That trade lawyer had pointed out that so long as you run your electricity system as a public utility, you can in fact maintain a two-price system. You can sell at a lower price in your own jurisdiction and you can sell at a higher price in terms of the electricity that you export. You can also, if you maintain your electricity system as a public utility, establish rules which dedicate the electricity to your own residents, your own consumers, your own industries, and only allow that which is surplus to be sold.

However, the NAFTA rules state that if you privatize and deregulate your electricity system, then you cannot maintain a two-price system. You effectively have to let the market decide what the price will be, and in the market, as I pointed out, the greatest amount of demand will be in the United States, specifically in the New York-New Jersey-Philadelphia-Baltimore-Washington corridor, along the New England states, and the Detroit-Chicago-Gary-Milwaukee corridor in the Midwest. That's where demand will be determined and that's where price will be determined. The NAFTA rules also say you cannot control exports. Once you privatize and deregulate, then essentially you must sell the electricity

according to whoever is prepared to bid the highest for the electricity, which is already happening in the United States.

The government says, "We disagree with the legal analysis." So I have challenged the government to provide their own legal analysis. I've been challenging the government for a year now. Provide your own legal analysis that supports your position. To this date, the government still hasn't provided a legal analysis in any way, a legal opinion of any kind, to support their position. And I think I know why. I think they are unwilling to put forward any legal opinion because they know any legal opinion would essentially say the same thing that Stephen Shrybman has said when he looked at the implications of the North American free trade agreement should Ontario privatize and deregulate its hydro-electricity system.

I say to people at home, if the government of the day can't even provide a legal opinion to provide support for their position, then that really tells you how flimsy their position is. It really tells you how much this is ideologically driven by a government which believes in privatizing highways, believes in privatizing water, believes in private schools, believes in privatizing more of the health care system and believes in private jails. It really tells you how much this is being driven by ideology and not being driven by a thoughtful, practical assessment about what is good for Ontario consumers and what is good for the Ontario economy, in terms of the long-term strategic outlook.

I want to address some of the excuses the government trots out. Because they don't have a legal analysis supporting their position, and because they've never come forward and actually made the business case for privatization, what they often try to do is trot out a number of scare campaigns to justify privatization.

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The first scare campaign they try to trot out is debt, when they say, "Oh, Ontario's hydroelectric system has a debt." Then they make the logical leap that because there's a debt, you must sell it off. I want people at home to make a few comparisons. They say that Ontario's hydroelectric system has a \$38-billion debt and that therefore it must be sold off. No other questions, no other analysis—it must be sold off.

I have done a little analysis of some other hydroelectric systems. For example, we have Hydro-Québec. Now Hydro-Québec is a very successful corporation. If you were to go to Quebec, Quebec industry, Quebec financiers, most of all the Quebec people, would say to

you, that Hydro-Québec is the essential backbone of Quebec's economy. It fundamentally underpins their steel industry, their pulp and paper industry, a number of other processing industries.

Guess what? Hydro-Québec has long-term debt of \$35 billion. According to this government, if you listen to their arguments, because it has long-term debt of \$35 billion, Hydro-Québec should be sold. That's their simplistic debt argument. Never mind that Hydro-Québec has revenues of \$11.5 billion a year. They don't want to consider what your revenues are that come in the door. Never mind that Hydro-Québec has fixed assets worth, as estimated here, \$49 billion. The simplistic argument of this government is, "Oh, if it has a debt of \$35 billion, you must sell it."

If you go through the list, BC Hydro carries a debt of \$8 billion on revenues of about \$7 billion, although we must keep in mind that BC has made a lot of money, a lot of revenue, out of selling hydro to California after California made their ridiculous decision to deregulate and privatize their system. But BC Hydro has a debt, as I point out, of \$7.5 billion on fixed assets of \$9 billion, and so I would conclude that this government's immediate leap of faith would be, "Oh, if it has a debt, you must sell it off."

Manitoba Hydro has fixed assets of \$6.5 billion, but it has long-term debt of \$6 billion. So once again, this government's conclusion would be, "Oh, Manitoba Hydro must be sold off. It has a debt."

I also looked at some of the big private utilities in the United States. Duke Energy has long-term debt of \$16 billion and I know that this government would conclude, "Oh, Duke Energy must be broken up and sold off because it carries debt."

We could look at the Tennessee Valley Authority, a large power generator in the United States. Tennessee Valley has long-term debt of \$34 billion. Again, this government would automatically make the leap of faith and say, "Oh, it must be sold off."

What nonsense. If you look at the assets that all of these hydro generators have and then you look at the revenues they are able to earn through the sales of electricity, they're all in very healthy positions. But this government refuses to consider the revenues that the generation of power, the transmission of power and the distribution of power create as publicly owned corporations. Those revenues are quite substantial. In fact, when you look at those revenues plus the value of the assets, the debt in every case is quite manageable.

What I really want to focus on here is the fact that all hydro systems, whether you look at Duke Energy in the United States, or TransAlta in Alberta, or the Tennessee Valley Authority in the United States, Manitoba Hydro, Hydro-Québec or BC Hydro, all hydro utilities, whether public or private, carry debt. That's the nature of the industry. The way this industry works is that when you see a demand for electricity you then borrow the money to build the facilities. Once you're providing hydro to consumers, you charge them hydro rates over a 20- or 30-

year period such that you pay the operating costs plus the construction costs plus the debt financing costs.

Hydro in Ontario can be maintained as a public utility by continuing to do that: setting our hydro rates over a 20- or 30-year period, such that we pay not only the operating costs, but the construction and the debt financing costs, just as Duke Energy, Tennessee Valley Authority and Bonneville Power Administration in the United States, TransAlta, Hydro-Québec, BC Hydro and Manitoba Hydro are doing. That's what they're all doing, every last one of them. Their debt levels, which they use to build the generating stations and transmission lines that cost billions of dollars to build—their revenues over a 20- or 30-year period are going to more than pay for the debt against those assets. Yet this government's position is, "Ontario's hydroelectric system has a debt; it must be sold"—a completely simplistic conclusion not based upon any facts.

So I say to people at home, do the comparison. Every hydroelectric system in the western world, whether publicly or privately owned, carries a debt level with it. This is such a capital-intensive industry that it costs hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars to build the facilities. No one I know of carries loose change around in their pocket of \$1 billion or \$2 billion. So the way this industry works is when there is a need for electricity, a demand for electricity, the money is borrowed, the facilities are built, the electricity is provided and then people pay for the facility, its construction costs, its debt costs and its operating costs over a term of 20 or 30 years.

It's really like having a mortgage on your house. No one I know of would expect someone to come up with \$250,000, \$300,000, \$400,000 to pay for their house in one lump sum. So what we do is debt-finance our home through a mortgage. Most mortgages are 25 years, if not 30 years, in length. We borrow the money, we either build or buy the house, and then as we live in it and earn income from work or other economic activities, we pay not only the debt-financing costs but the operating costs of our home. That's how electricity works. If someone came up to you and said, "Oh, you've got a \$200,000 debt against your home, therefore you must automatically sell it," you'd say, "You're crazy." The same logic applies to this government, exactly the same logic.

This government has provided no analysis, no business case and no legal opinion to support their automatic assumption that privatization of our electricity system is somehow going to be better for people. In fact, if you look at the evidence out of California, Alberta, Montana, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts or New York, the evidence is it's not better for people. A privatized system, where you've got corporate executives who want \$2-million and \$3-million salaries plus their yachts and expensive cars, and the people on Bay Street who want their \$100-million or \$200-million commissions, and profit-takers all along the line, inevitably drives up prices.

In fact, if you look at North America, private electricity is at least 20% more expensive than publicly

owned electricity. Those studies have been done by the Consumer Federation of America. They've looked at all of the states in the United States which have privatized their systems, and they've looked at publicly owned electricity systems. No one has been able to refute the Consumer Federation of America in terms of that study they completed last fall. What does this government have? Nothing. They just repeat and repeat and repeat a phony debt mantra.

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The other argument the government offers up when they say Hydro One must be sold off is because you're going to have to make some investments in maintaining and sustaining the transmission lines. And they say the only place you're going to get that money is if you sell it. Well, I spent some time looking at the privatization prospectus. The prospectus basically sets out the government's plan for privatization of Hydro One. What's interesting when you read the prospectus is that Hydro One invested about \$500 million two years ago for maintenance and sustenance of the transmission lines, they invested \$500 million a year ago and they've budgeted \$500 million for this year. All of that has either been budgeted through retained earnings from the sales of electricity or through selling bonds where they've decided or wished to, in effect, finance that maintenance of a system through longer-term financing. Nowhere in the Hydro One prospectus does it say that the system must be sold in order to finance maintenance of the transmission lines.

In fact, when you look at the investment section of the prospectus, the section that talks about the corporate plan for investments, it doesn't talk about \$100 million to maintain the line leading to northeastern Ontario, \$100 million to maintain the line leading to southwestern Ontario or \$100 million to maintain the line leading to eastern Ontario. It doesn't say any of those things. The corporate plan, when you read the investment section of the privatization prospectus, talks about how a privatized Hydro would spend \$100 million increasing the interconnection transmission line with New York so more of Ontario's electricity could be exported to New York. It talks about a \$50-million investment to increase the transmission hookup with Michigan so more of Ontario's electricity could be exported to Michigan. Then it talks about building a transmission cable under Lake Erie and they don't want to mention how much it will cost except to say it would be a substantial investment. We did some research, we made some phone calls and asked for some opinions. You're talking about close to \$1 billion to establish that transmission line under Lake Erie into Pennsylvania.

The investment strategy of a privatized Hydro One says nothing about maintaining the lines in Ontario. It in effect says their strategic plan would be to spend in excess of \$1 billion so that—and I can quote page 49 of the prospectus—"low-cost electricity generated in Ontario could be exported to more lucrative markets in the United States." That's what it says in the privatization document.

The second argument this government trots out to justify privatization isn't even mentioned in the privatization document. It doesn't get any of the investment whatsoever. It doesn't have any investment plan whatsoever. The only investment plan you find in the Hydro One privatization document would be a strategy to build more transmission into the United States, to buy transmission systems in the US New England states and to buy transmission systems in the US Midwest states, all for the purpose of exporting more of Ontario's electricity into those states.

As I say, if the corporate plan is to sell more of Ontario's electricity into the United States because profit-driven corporations get a higher price for that in the United States, plus they can play on the exchange rate, where does that leave Ontario consumers? I'll tell you where it leaves Ontario consumers. Ontario hydro-electricity consumers would be put in the position where they would have to pay the much higher price that can be attained in the United States or watch our electricity simply being exported out of the jurisdiction.

Again, I think the reason the government doesn't want to come forward with a business case, with a legal opinion or a legal analysis, is because if they did, their charade, their shell game, would be over.

Who benefits from this? I haven't seen anyone here on the doorsteps of Queen's Park carrying a placard saying, "We want Ontario's hydro system sold." I haven't seen 500 people, I haven't seen 100 people, I haven't seen one person carrying a placard—no one. None of the ordinary citizens in this province want to see our hydro system sold off. They recognize that electricity is an essential service. They recognize that as we go forward more and more into the 21st century it's going to become more essential and more strategic to our economy. The people I talk to out there all say we must maintain control over it. And you certainly don't see anybody marching up and down in front of Queen's Park saying, "Sell off our hydro."

But if you read the business press, if you read the Financial Post or the Report on Business of the Globe and Mail or the finance pages of the Toronto Star, what you find there is that the folks from Bay Street—the financiers, the investment bankers à la Ernie Eves—are the people who want our hydro sold off. If you read their articles at all, it's very clear why they want it sold off. They know they can make a lot of money. Those Bay Street investment bankers know that taking a system that has been one of the most reliable suppliers of electricity in the world—not just North America—and privatizing it, when Ontario is semi-surrounded by US states that are either electricity-short or potentially electricity-short going into the future, where the prices are already higher, they can make a lot of money privatizing hydro and then selling at the much higher American rate. That's who's clamouring for the privatization of our hydro system and that's exactly who this government is listening to—exactly who this government is listening to.

Right now, over the past few weeks, we've seen a bit of a charade by this government because the people are

on to them. I just want to talk about the scenario at Hydro One over the past little while. The scenario at Hydro One went like this: in 1998—oh, by the way, I invite people to go back and read the financial reports of Ontario Hydro for 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997, because what people will find is that substantial amounts of money were in effect being allocated to debt reduction. By 1998, when Ontario Hydro was broken up into Hydro One, the transmission company, and Ontario Power Generation, the generation company, over \$1 billion was actually dedicated to debt reduction that year. So the debt was actually coming down, the debt was being paid off. So I invite people to go look at those annual reports from Ontario Hydro.

But then the government, in its drive to privatize—and let's face it, that was this government's agenda coming in. When they came in in 1995, one of the first things they did in the ominous bill—or, as most of us call it, the omnibus bill—which they wanted passed immediately before Christmas with no debate, was to take away the right of Ontario citizens to insist upon a binding referendum when it comes to the sale of hydro assets. So you can see that already in the fall of 1995 this government had established that it wanted to privatize hydro, no matter what. Without looking at any of the arguments, without presenting a business case, a legal analysis, they'd already made up their minds. They wanted to privatize, just as they wanted to privatize the 407, just as they want to privatize jails, just as they want to privatize water, just as they want private universities, just as they want private elementary schools and so on. The decision was already made.

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So when they passed their so-called Electricity Competition Act in 1998 and broke up Ontario Hydro into Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One, they appointed their cronies, their political buddies, to the board of directors of both Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation. In fact, the chief Conservative bagman, Bill Farlinger, was appointed chair of the board at Ontario Power Generation and Sir Graham Day, the great privatizer of electricity and water in Britain for Margaret Thatcher, was brought over to be the chair of Hydro One to oversee the privatization of it. This government said to the cronies that they appointed to the board of directors, "Start behaving like a private corporation. And so you can start behaving like a private corporation, we're going to make sure that the freedom of information act doesn't apply to you any more, so the public of Ontario won't be able to ask embarrassing questions about what you're doing over there. The public of Ontario won't be able to ask questions about what the salaries are and the bonuses are and how expensive the yachts are and how big and expensive the cars are, or what your expense accounts are being spent on, or what other cozy deals you've got with Conservative consultants."

That's the first thing this government did. The next thing they did was tell their cronies on the board, "Start acting like a private corporation." So they did. They didn't look at what the salary is for the people who run

Hydro-Québec, even though it's a very large hydro-electric utility. They didn't look at the salaries at Manitoba Hydro. They didn't look at the salaries at BC Hydro. They looked at their corporate friends on Bay Street and their bloated salaries, their greed and excess, and they said, "Let us bring that to Hydro One and OPG." And that's exactly what happened.

In fact, when the government was first challenged, and I challenged the Minister of Energy in November to justify the million-dollar clubs that were being created at Hydro One and OPG, he stood up and said, "That's the way it is in the private sector. That's the way it is and that's the way it should be here." He said that he stood behind these excessive salaries and excessive bonuses and bloated expense accounts.

The government did stand behind it, and the government turned a blind eye to it for three years, until it started to get out into public. Now, all of a sudden, since it's gotten out into public, the government is looking around for someone to blame. They don't want to acknowledge their own responsibility, they don't want to acknowledge that this is their agenda, they don't want to acknowledge that people's hydro rates have gone up so that Eleanor Clitheroe could have her \$2.2-million salary, the use of a yacht, the \$174,000 car and the \$1-million pension. They don't want to admit that was their agenda.

So now they've said, "Oh, it's the board at Hydro One that did this." Well, who appointed the board? The Conservative government. Who gave the board its strategic direction? The Conservative government. Who took away the freedom of information act so the board could implement all of these privatization excesses without the public learning about it or having a chance to get at it? The Conservative government. And who tried to say earlier on that they didn't know any of this was happening? The Conservative government.

When you cut through all this, and this is what people really need to understand, what we've had in Ontario has been a public utility system that was required by law to provide power at cost—and that was a dedicated system. What this government wants to do is do away with that dedicated system, sell off all the assets to their corporate friends on Bay Street, who then want to peddle as much of the electricity as possible into the United States where they can get a much higher price, and then watch the price in Canada, the price in Ontario, rise to the same level as it is in the United States when you combine the markets.

They don't want to acknowledge, with all those profit-takers—with a profit-taker on generation, a profit-taker on transmission, a profit-taker on distribution, a profit-taker on financing, profit-taking in terms of Bay Street wanting their commission, and new fees for administration and a new bureaucracy—when you add up all of those things and the grossly inflated, bloated executive salaries—all of the new profit-takers, fee-takers, commission-takers—the price of electricity for Ontario consumers and Ontario industries is going to rise substantially.

It's already rising substantially. People who have gotten their bills for June—and I've heard from many of them—are very angry when they see all of the new costs on their bill, all of the new additions. And all we need is two or three hot weeks this summer, when everyone turns on their air conditioning, and just like California the price of a deregulated system will go through the roof.

In fact, here's an interesting analysis for people to take in. Last summer, when it got very hot for about six weeks in southern Ontario—in fact, it got very hot everywhere south of Hudson Bay—and people all across eastern North America were turning on their air conditioners, the price remained, here in Ontario, in terms of just the price for power and not the price for distribution and transmission, about \$43 a megawatt hour. If you went across into Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, that big network there that has all been privatized and deregulated, the price of electricity went to \$1,500 a megawatt hour during those very hot days when everyone had their air conditioner turned on. That's what happens under a deregulated, privatized system when the demand for electricity goes up. Whether it's because it's very cold in the winter or very dark and people have their lights on, or everybody wants to turn their air conditioner on in the summer, the price goes through the roof, as it did in California. That's another reason why people ought to be so concerned about this.

I just want to say a few words about history. When the government says Ontario's hydroelectricity system has a debt, yes, it does have a debt. But people need to know where that debt came from. You see, it was another Conservative government, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, that said, "Oh, the answer to hydroelectricity supply issues is nuclear power." It was the likes of Bill Davis and John Robarts and some of the people who are still in cabinet positions here. Ernie Eves was part of this decision-making in the early 1980s that said, "Let's go big into nuclear power." But they didn't estimate at the time what the full capital costs would be of building those nuclear stations. They didn't estimate at all what the maintenance costs would be for nuclear power plants. They certainly didn't have an accurate sense of what the storage costs would be, and they certainly did not pay any attention to what the decommissioning costs would be.

So the Conservatives built Bruce, and there was a cost overrun of at least a couple billion dollars and then huge annual maintenance costs of a couple hundred million a year. Then the Conservatives built Pickering, and there was a cost overrun of a few billion dollars and annual maintenance costs of \$400 million and \$500 million a year. Then the Conservatives, in the late 1970s, decided to build Darlington, and they said at the time, "Oh, it will only cost \$5 billion." But when it was completed in 1989, the price that came in was \$14 billion, \$9 billion over budget.

So who put Ontario's hydro system into debt? None other than the very same Conservatives who now come forward and say, "Oh, because there's a debt, the only thing you can do is sell it off." I say to people, if they

think the Conservatives' fascination—obsession—with nuclear power was a debt-ridden fiasco and a disaster, if that's what they believe, then they had better look twice at this latest instantaneous decision that the Conservatives have come up with, because it will be even more of a disaster for Ontario hydro consumers and Ontario industries that are dependent upon hydroelectricity.

Remember: no analysis from this government, no legal opinion of the interaction of the North American free trade agreement and privatization, no business case, nothing. All they've got, all they've resorted to is a scare campaign about debt. They want to use that as a justification for selling off, I would say, our strategically most important asset in this province.

Just to deal with this issue of the government continuing to talk about debt, if people go to the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp Web site—now, why is the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp important? It's important because it's one of the other companies that was created when the government broke up Ontario Hydro. The government says there's a \$38-billion debt, but if you go to the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp's Web site and look at their financial documents, they in fact tell a different story. I just want people at home to know this.

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The Ontario Electricity Financial Corp cannot mislead or tell an untruth in their financial documents. To do so would be an offence under securities law and would be an offence under criminal law punishable by 10 years in jail. So while you hear this government and especially the Minister of Energy blathering on about a \$38-billion debt, it says in the actual financial documents that if you look at the debt of \$38 billion you must then consider the value of successor companies, which are valued at in excess of \$17 billion, and then you must look at the value of the revenue stream. And what's the revenue stream? Over \$13 billion. So you take the value of the assets at \$17 billion, the value of the revenue stream at \$13 billion and what is the residual debt? It's only a little over \$7 billion.

Once again, this government can't get the numbers straight. As I've pointed out, if you compare that residual debt when you consider the value of the assets and the value of the revenue stream and you look at other public and private utilities in North America, Ontario's hydro system is not in a bad position at all. In fact, if you look at the debt-to-annual-revenues ratio, the former Ontario Hydro had debt at 3.8 times its annual revenues; in other words, very substantial annual revenues. If you look at the debt ratios of Manitoba Hydro and Hydro-Québec, their debt-to-revenue ratios are only 3 to 1. So in fact, other public utilities which have very good bond rating reputations are not that dissimilar, when you look at debt and revenues, to Ontario's hydro system. And if you look at many of the private utilities in the United States or elsewhere, you will see that while they have a lower debt-to-revenue ratio, it is not that appreciably different.

So I invite people across this province to go look at some of these documents. In fact, I'll give you a couple of other Web sites that are very good. If you go to

www.publicpower.ca, that is an excellent Web site to look at because it will provide you with historical information on what happened in California and historical information on what happened in other states that privatized and deregulated. It will provide you with a Web site address for the Consumer Federation of America, which, by the way, says that states in the United States should avoid privatization and deregulation in view of what's happened in Pennsylvania, Montana, New York, Massachusetts and, most of all, what's happened in California.

I just want to close again with what happened in California. California thought, when they deregulated and privatized their system, that they had about a 20% surplus of power. They thought, "We've got enough power here that we should be able to guard against market manipulation and profit-driven corporations manipulating the market to drive up the price." But after they sold it off, Enron—you know, the \$50-billion swindle in the United States—got control over some of the key assets and started shutting down generating stations. By shutting down generating stations, they created an artificial shortage. Once they created the artificial shortage—there are some industries, especially process industries, that not only need power but have to have an assured supply of power. If they don't have an assured supply of power and they have to shut down, it can be a multi-million dollar loss in terms of the process. Petrochemicals and plastics are process industries that come to mind.

Those industries, because they need an assured supply, started agreeing to pay four, five and six times as much for electricity. But then the Enrons, seeing that this was a good thing, not only shut down more generation but started shipping generation out of California to increase the electricity shortage. Then they jacked up the price—not five times, not 10 times, not 20 times, but in some cases 100 times.

The Governor of California was on national television three weeks ago in the United States and made the point that by their calculations now in less than two years the consumers of the state of California were overcharged to the tune of \$31 billion by profit-driven, private electricity traders who manipulated the market in order to screw people and increase their profits. I don't want that to happen here, but I know, because the corporate plan is to move more electricity to the United States, we could very quickly see our so-called surplus go to the United States. We could then see market manipulation in a privatized, deregulated system and people would be gouged.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired.
Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: The time now is for questions and comments. There will be four, and then I'll come back to the member for Kenora-Rainy River.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I started making some notes about some of the silly comments that were coming from the member for Kenora-Rainy River. I used up a couple of pages and I quit, because I had lots to respond to.

I got thinking about his comments about a mortgage on a house. You're absolutely right: when you get a mortgage on a house, you start paying it off. You don't start adding to it the way you did during your five-year term in government. You kept adding and adding to the mortgage. You didn't pay anything down. That's what happened with Ontario Hydro. You kept adding and adding. You don't do that to mortgages. You don't take a mortgage on a house at \$170,000 and build it up to \$380,000 and then look for another \$50,000 so you can fix the roof and some of the windows. That's what's going on with Ontario Hydro today and that's how you were running it.

You talked about where did the debt come from. I can tell you where some of it came from. It was from your mishandling in winding up the Darlington nuclear station, starting out around \$4 billion or \$5 billion and ending up at \$15 billion to \$16 billion. No wonder it was in trouble. You didn't talk about the actual decommissioning costs. You didn't talk about the contracts that you people made with the NUGs—ridiculous contracts that were put out there that are totally unaffordable and are not working. That's the way you dealt with private companies.

No wonder you're concerned about something like privatization, especially when you kept two sets of books. No wonder you did. When you talk about adding revenue to the assets, that that should be the total value, what kind of school of economics did you go to when you just simply add on revenue and that's the value of it, when it's costing more per year to run than the actual revenue coming in? Your speech made absolutely no sense. I just don't follow how you could talk about that. Maybe I do, when you were in office having two sets of books for five years. Thank heavens that came to an end in 1995.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): The member for Kenora-Rainy River said many things that I agree with and others that I think were not entirely correct. I have questions for him that I hope he'll answer in his comments following at the end.

Three basic points: one, as I understand it, is that the groundwork for the breakup, sale and privatization of Hydro was begun under the leadership of Maurice Strong, whom the New Democratic Party placed as chair of Hydro. I understand that Mr Strong, through his business plan, put in place the groundwork for the breakup, sale, privatization of Hydro. So I would like the member for Kenora-Rainy River to perhaps reflect on his time when he was a cabinet minister in that government and to say why he and his colleagues proceeded with that course of action, which has been followed through and carried on by the current government, albeit to a much greater extreme. But they have followed the agenda which you set, in my opinion, back in the years from 1990 to 1995.

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Second question: Schedule B of the bill deals with the Ontario Energy Board, and the leader of the third party

made a reference to government cronies being put on all of these boards and commissions. Would he please explain how and why Floyd Laughren, his former colleague and finance minister under the New Democratic government, is now the chair of that board, and does he not have confidence in Mr Laughren and his ability to protect consumers? Because it sounded like a pretty stinging indictment of the people that the current government appoint to some of these boards.

Last, but certainly not least, as I understand it there was a rumour today that former Premier Bob Rae is one of the new designates from the government to be on the new Hydro One board. Perhaps the member from Kenora-Rainy River would want to speak to that and the appropriateness of that. Does he have confidence in Mr Rae?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): First, the member from Northumberland, Mr Galt, is the reason why I wear cowboy boots in this chamber. Think about it for a couple of minutes.

Clearly, the Liberals are under a little bit of pressure. Look, it was the Liberals who were advocates of the sell-off, not only of our generating system—everything from Niagara Falls northward—but of our transmission lines as well. They were very much on side. There were the Tories in one back pocket of the private sector and there's Dalton McGuinty, like a little baby kangaroo, sticking his head out of the second back pocket and there's the privatization sector, including Hydro One, this government's friends—Sir Graham Day. Their friends—these were Tory appointments. These people were hand-picked. They were selected by the Tories, and it's clear they were reporting back to this government on a weekly basis, if not more frequently. One has to question whether or not they were following the marching orders of this government.

Then there's Sir Graham Day and the pre-privatization board of Hydro One—that's what it was—operating to the private sector principles that this government praises—millions upon millions of dollars in salaries. Even more repugnant, the payoffs—the grease—upon resignation or privatization being two-fold, three-fold, the \$176,000 car allowances and hundreds of thousands of dollars in racing yachts and here's Hydro One, the pre-privatization board, greasing the Liberals to the tune of five grand and the Tories to the tune of \$7,500 in that little by-election that was held up there in Dufferin-Peel, the election of the new Premier. You see, I know the Tories are obliged to that sector. It's clear the Liberals are, too.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): I listened with great interest to the speech by my colleague the member for Kenora-Rainy River, the leader of the third party. In the interests of full disclosure, I'm not going to give the Web site again. He gave out a Web site address like it's a source—

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Come on, read it.

Hon Mr Baird: I'll give it out. No, I'm not going to give it out.

Interjection: Oh, go ahead.

Hon Mr Baird: Ontariopower.ca. He gives this Web site out and says, "You know what? Members of the public, you can go get a source of neutral information. Don't believe me. Go to this Web site." I'm sitting across the hall in my office and, you know, I key in the Web site address, ontariopower.ca, and who pops up on my screen?

Interjection: Who?

Hon Mr Baird: I thought it must be one of those viruses because all of a sudden there is the smiling face of the leader of the NDP, Howard Hampton, on my computer screen. An independent Web site. It was a virus, a socialist computer virus. I need a socialist virus checker for my computer.

Anyway, I looked at the site and it was all just NDP socialist propaganda and I didn't see any reference on that Web site to Maurice Strong, someone who they paid millions, someone who had the idea of taking of taking taxpayers' money and buying rainforests in South America. I didn't see that down there. And I didn't see the letter that you sent to the Minister of Energy earlier. You mentioned that during question period. I didn't see a copy of that letter. We should have a public inquiry into where that letter went because we can't find the letter anywhere. The government phoned his office and we can't find his letter. So I thought it was quite interesting.

But I'll respect the member. He has a firm position and he sticks to his guns and I admire the honourable member for that. Where were you on December 12? I know where Dalton McGuinty was. He was out there saying he was in favour of privatizing hydro in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Kenora-Rainy River has two minutes to respond.

Mr Hampton: I want to thank the members. I'll give you the Web site address. It is www.publicpower.ca. In fact, you can go there and you can find a legal analysis of hydro privatization and NAFTA, something you won't get out of the government. You can find information from the Consumer Federation of America, looking at what happens when states privatize and deregulate their power, something you won't get out of the government. You can find an analysis by an international organization about what happened after Britain privatized its electricity and the fact that people are paying 25% more than they should.

I just want to say to Mr Galt, go back and read the Ontario Hydro annual reports for 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997, and they will detail ad nauseam the revenue stream of Ontario's hydroelectric system and how much money was being spent each year to bring down the debt. I just want to say to my Liberal colleagues that yes, the NDP did bring in a noted Liberal, Maurice Strong, and you're right: true to his Liberal colours, he proposed that we should sell off Ontario Hydro. If you go back and check the Globe and Mail of the spring of 1994, you'll see an exposé that says that Maurice Strong is leaving Ontario Hydro in a huff because the NDP cabinet told him no to

hydro privatization, no Liberal strategies to privatize hydro.

I move the following motion: that Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector, be now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day three months hence.

The Acting Speaker: I'm sorry. I'm not allowed to accept a motion during responses. As debate revolves in clockwise fashion, I'll now look to my right. The Chair recognizes the member for Northumberland.

Mr Galt: I'll be sharing my time with the great member from Cambridge.

I think it's wise, maybe, at this point in time to just share with the members of the Legislature the four objectives that the Ontario government has with Hydro One: (1) to provide future generations of Ontarians with an efficient source of energy and electricity for many generations to come and to ensure that we're competitive in an international marketplace, going forward with respect to that supply of power; (2) to provide the necessary capital for restructuring with respect to the transmission and distribution of power in the province of Ontario; (3) to generate revenue to reduce the stranded debt and make sure we do not get into a situation which, over decades, has built up a \$38-billion debt; and (4) to bring private sector discipline and efficiencies to the operation of the transmission system, while ensuring consumers are protected under the tight regulatory control of prices by the Ontario Energy Board.

The present status of Ontario Hydro: we're sitting with a grand total of a \$38-billion debt, regardless of how the leader of the third party would like to play with it. I'm not sure what school of economics he went to, adding the revenue on to the assets and then claiming that's the total value. I really don't understand that. But what I do understand is that within that \$38-billion debt, there's \$17 billion in assets. That means there's \$20 billion that isn't covered. That isn't much of a mortgage, and if that was a private company or any other organization, it would have been bankrupt long ago, when you're two and a half times in debt of your value. That just doesn't work.

What a mess we're in, and how would we ever have gotten in this mess if it hadn't been for a monopoly? I think this monopoly for its first 75 or 80 years did a great job for the people of Ontario. But, typical of monopolies that discourage innovation, that are unresponsive to the needs of the public, we ended up in this situation.

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I remember when I first took office I received a lot of complaints about Ontario Hydro and the work ethic, how there'd be 12, 15 people standing around a truck and one working up on the pole. That disappeared within a year or two, but that was certainly a very common complaint.

There are concerns the public has about non-response at times of emergency. We get a big windstorm and my phone starts to light up at home because people can't get through. They have not responded with good customer service.

I think of the waste of power that has occurred in this province since we went to nuclear. That's over 30 years, three decades plus. Nuclear power runs level. They can't bring it up and take it down. It runs level night and day, but the demand for power goes up and down. Yes, they top some of it up with gas-powered plants, oil-powered plants, but there is a tremendous amount of electricity lost at night. You can't store electricity, of course, except a bit in batteries. It pretty well has to be used. It just dissipates and is gone. They could have been converting it through electrolysis to hydrogen. Probably they could have produced enough hydrogen to run all the streetcars and all the buses and subway cars in Toronto, and maybe many other cities; it's a wild guess. But a tremendous amount of energy has been wasted. Did that monopoly ever consider it? Did it ever think of it? No, they didn't consider it.

Thank heaven we're getting on with moving from a monopoly to competition so we can bring in some of the innovative ideas that the select committee on alternative fuel sources is promoting. When I say "innovative," they're actually happening in a lot of other areas, but because of this monopoly, this dinosaur, we've been unable to bring them in: things like net metering, where if you have a windmill or solar panels and you're producing more power than you need, you can run your meter backwards. Half the states now have that kind of legislation in place and are using it. That encourages people to put up small windmills on their farms or at their homes so that they can be more self-sufficient, producing clean energy rather than the coal-powered plants which, I gather, listening to the NDP, must be what they're supporting.

What the government is really talking about is not public versus private but rather monopoly versus competition. To me, that makes an awful lot of sense. But it appears that the opposition—both parties—are in favour of the status quo, with billions and billions of dollars of waste with plants that are sitting idle, not being used. Look at the Lennox generating station and how little it has been used. Look at the Wesleyville station, which never even had generators. But I gather they like that idea and that's the way they want to stay. They refuse to support Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One Inc. and its subsidiaries. I think it's a crying shame that both opposition parties resist supporting that particular bill. It's what they've been crying and yelling about for weeks, and we bring in the bill and they refuse to support it.

I think it's interesting to notice what happened during the lost decade from 1985 to 1995 and what happened to rates. Back in late 1995 or 1996, I was chatting with some people from the Ford Motor Co. They were telling me that in 1985—this is their story—they had some 17 jurisdictions where they made cars in North America. In 1985, Ontario was the cheapest source where they could get electricity to produce cars, but by 1995 Ontario was the 15th most expensive place for them to make cars in their 17 jurisdictions. This is one factor in economic development, not to mention taxes that were out of con-

trol, not to mention labour laws that had gone totally awry. They also looked at health costs. A lot of these things go into economic development: will a plant or will a plant not come to certain areas? It's obvious why so many were leaving this country, leaving in droves, through that particular decade.

So what happened in 1995? First, we froze the hydro rates. Prior to that, in that lost decade, they'd gone up something like 90%. We brought in the Macdonald commission, because we knew the mess that we were in was not sustainable.

I think it's interesting, and a lot of the public probably doesn't seem to be aware, that the market has now been open for competition in the production of electricity and the results have been quite impressive. We were paying 4.3 cents for the production of power from the generation to our utilities. It's been averaging below three cents for that first month and early in the morning it gets down to around 1.5 cents. In the peak, in the afternoon, sometimes it gets up to around 4.3 cents.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): What about July?

Mr Galt: The opposition is concerned—yes, in July it may go up. It might go up to five cents or even six cents in the heat of the day. But so far it's proving that it's working very well, and obviously the rates are coming down, which relates to power generation. Yes, there's been some added on to the distribution so we can pay down this debt, but that goes over years and years of misuse. It's interesting to notice the NDP and some of their advertising slogans that I've been going through—"Trash Hydro Privatization." I'd suggest the NDP trashed electricity competitiveness back in the early 1990s, and there's nothing that's competitive about it today. I think a government is something like bumper cars at an amusement park: you can't sit still and not get hit. It's just unfortunate the way the opposition are looking at this.

I did want to make a few comments, in winding up, about the select committee on alternative fuels, before I turn the floor over to my good friend from the great riding of Cambridge. Because of opening it up to competition, by bringing previous electricity bills into this Legislature, we'll be able to move ahead with things like net metering. I mentioned that a little earlier. It would be so innovative in Ontario, but certainly not in the rest of the world. All the things we recommended, all 141 recommendations in that report, are already happening in some jurisdictions in the world. However, there's no particular country where they're all happening.

I encourage the members to have a look at this report. It talks about everything. It's a beautiful report. It's being held up there by the member for Windsor West. There are nice pictures on the front. It was well put together by our researchers. It was arrived at by consensus; all the members from all three parties agreed to it. So I would look forward to the implementation by our government. It talks about the renewable portfolio standards, in other words, bringing in green power, and all the electric

distribution PUCs—they would have a requirement. We're recommending there be a task force to look at the actual details of how that would be brought in.

Certainly, I encourage anyone who's listening this evening to go to the legislative Web site and have a look at this report. If they want a copy, it's certainly very easy to just let the clerks know and a copy would be sent to them.

In closing, I encourage people to get involved and have a look at the select committee. Also, I'll be able to support Bill 58 when it comes forward. It's certainly innovative and it's setting up the rights of the Ontario government to deal with their assets as they see fit.

Without further ado, I now would call on the member for Cambridge for his remarks.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I'm pleased to be here on this lovely evening.

Consumer protection has always been the government's first priority in restructuring Ontario's electrical sector. We made it clear—

Interjections.

Mr Martiniuk: We're hearing from the cheap seats right now.

We made it clear right from day one, when we put our electricity customers first in designing our new market and when we made the commitment to fix the problems of the past, to safeguard our future electrical supply and ensure that safe, reliable power would continue to be supplied to consumers at competitive costs.

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May 1 marked an exciting new era in Ontario's history when we opened the electricity market to competition. The transition was quite successful, I must add. The lights didn't go out. The power prices over the past month have been 33% lower than the 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. Isn't that remarkable? That's not what we're hearing from the opposition. I'd say this is an excellent start in our plan to restructure the electrical sector.

Ontario's new market has all the key ingredients to function smoothly, especially with respect to adequate supply and a robust market design. From our May 1 start-up, our new market will evolve and mature as market participants gain experience, the tools and processes are further defined, new participants invest in the industry and competition strengthens. And as the market matures, we should see other benefits, including greater efficiencies, better service and innovation.

As with other jurisdictions that have been successful in making the transition to competition, we firmly believe that market competition, commercial discipline and strong regulation are the best guarantees of reasonable prices for customers over the long term. And for the first time, Ontario's 4.1 million residential electrical customers have two choices in buying their power: they can decide to do nothing and their local utility will continue to supply them with power at variable or spot-rate market—that's because the generation of electricity is a competitive activity, with supply and demand determining price—or they can purchase their electricity at a

fixed rate from one of several retailers licensed by the Ontario Energy Board. It is completely the customer's choice, based on their individual circumstances and preferences. Some people liken the two choices available to them to a choice between a fixed or a variable-rate mortgage.

But no matter what choice consumers make, their local utility will continue to deliver electricity and bill customers for transmission and distribution and still be responsible for the safety and reliability of local distribution.

I'd like to point out that we are not the first deregulating the electrical sector. In fact, for the first time the transmission and distribution of electricity will be strictly regulated by the Ontario Energy Board in order to protect customers. We've established an Independent Electricity Market Operator, or IMO, to oversee the wholesale market and grid operations of our electrical system. By law, IMO must protect the interests of customers with respect to the reliability and quality of electricity services in Ontario. This is not what I would call deregulation. It's competition combined with strong regulatory oversight, which will work to the benefit of all Ontarians.

We protected consumers by putting in place tough customer protection laws for energy retailers which require them to operate fairly and honestly. We have provided the Ontario Energy Board with the tools it needs to oversee the retailing practices of marketers and deal with those engaging in questionable practices. For example, all retailers must be licensed by the OEB, and as a condition of their licences, they must follow the electricity retailer code of conduct that establishes guidelines and standards. This code requires salespeople to carry a photograph identification when retailing door to door, to indicate that they don't represent a distribution utility, to clearly state the price and other terms, and to provide a clearly printed contract. The offer must clearly indicate the price, any other fees, the length of the contract and any other term such as cancellation charges, renewal terms and transferral or assignment of the contract.

Direct sale contracts must also include a buyer's right to cancel. The statement should be in not less than 12-point type, which is a readable size of printed type much larger than so-called fine print. Retailers must give customers ample time to understand an offer without pressure or harassment. No customer is required to show their electrical bill or any other information to a retailer unless they decide to sign a contract with that retailer.

In fact, electrical retailers are subject to the same consumer protection laws as other sellers in the province under the Consumer Protection Act.

If there are any problems, the Ontario Energy Board, headed by Floyd Laughren, has the authority to levy financial penalties against a retailer or revoke or suspend its licence. The OEB has zero tolerance for anyone engaged in questionable marketing practices. This was demonstrated on April 25 when OEB's director of licens-

ing levied significant fines on two electrical retailers for violation of the code of conduct.

Retailers want to do their part as well. So far, companies have responded by changing their administration procedures and by reprimanding or dismissing sales agents who haven't followed the rules.

The energy board also has a dispute resolution process in place and the director of licences will make a ruling if the dispute can't be resolved with the retailer.

But consumers also have a responsibility to take care of their own interests. That means that consumers, if they want to sign a fixed-price contract, should read the terms and conditions before signing and make sure they understand what they're signing. A contract is a legally binding document, and currently customers have a right to cancel without penalty by notifying the company within 10 business days after signing.

I would strongly urge customers to ask questions when the retailer comes to the door: Do you have a licence from the OEB? What is the length of the contract? Is there a penalty for cancelling? Can the retailer cancel a contract? What is the price per kilowatt hour, and will it vary? What additional charges are there?

Information and education materials have been provided over the past years through brochures, fact sheets, bill inserts, a toll-free information line, a ministry Web site, town hall meetings, seniors' information sessions, and radio, print and television advertising. In fact, since 1999 the ministry has distributed 1.3 million brochures and 11 million utility bill inserts in an effort to inform customers well before the market opening. Our toll-free information line is available at 1-888-668-4636.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I just listened very carefully to the comments made by the member for Cambridge. I know he wants residents in the province of Ontario who might consider buying electricity from a supplier to be very careful in what they purchase. This Bill 58 in fact has a section that deals with consumers' rights and what should be disclosed to the consumers.

This government should have learned some months ago and should have planned for this some months ago. There are over a million customers in the province of Ontario who have already signed contracts to purchase electricity from these suppliers. The warning comes just a little bit late, because we know there are thousands, probably tens of thousands, of examples of where electricity retailers haven't been honest at the door. In fact, there are some cases of outright fraud. In my constituency I have had one example I can think of where the signature on the contract simply wasn't put there by the so-called purchaser. My colleague from Prescott-Russell himself has been a victim of this fraud.

Although this bill contains some further protection—though it's so complicated that I'm not so sure it's protection at all—what are we going to do for those who have signed contracts over this past year or so? They're left out in the cold. They're hung out to dry. I think this government should be interested in all the consumers in Ontario.

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Mr Kormos: The member for Nickel Belt, Shelley Martel, is going to have a chance to speak before the night is through, at least I hope she is. She's at least going to be participating in these two-minute questions and comments.

I did listen. Painfully and with great patience and with an inner fortitude that I didn't know I could muster up, I listened to the member for Northumberland, Mr Galt. He's the kind of guy who will pass gas and then blame it on the dog. We've got him in here ignoring the reality of the history of Hydro. I'm not sure he's ignoring it; I suspect he isn't familiar with it.

If he had listened to Howard Hampton talk about the history of Ontario Hydro in this province, he'd have learned that the so-called debt—and it's a debt that has been expressed in hyperbolic terms; that's the most generous and safest parliamentary way to describe it—is a debt that the consumer is going to pay off anyway. Why don't you tell folks that, that Hydro users in this province are going to pay every penny of that Hydro debt but you're going to sell the multi-billion-dollar assets of Ontario Hydro—Hydro One and then all our generating stations—out from underneath them?

What's the matter with these guys? You've got to be careful. The scripts that you're given by the little minions behind the Speaker don't replace real research on your part. You're being paid big bucks. You voted yourself a salary increase that was exceeded only by Ms Clitheroe's. You've got to earn the salaries you're being paid. Do some independent reading. Do some research on your own. Go to www.publicpower.ca and find out what's really going on.

Mr Duncan: I listened carefully to the members for Northumberland and Cambridge and I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond.

First of all, both members addressed problems with respect to Hydro's past. One spoke of the problems associated with the debt of the old Ontario Hydro. The other spoke of other problems related to regulation, deregulation and so on.

Let's make sure we understand what this bill is about. This bill is presumably about privatizing Hydro One, the transmission grid, that is, the wires that take the power from where it's produced to where it's sold, to the local retailer. That asset—and it is an asset, a huge asset to this province—makes money, \$300 million a year. It doesn't lose money. It is a natural monopoly. If the government chooses to privatize Hydro One, there will be no competition in the transmission of hydroelectric power.

When the member for Northumberland addressed the question of competition, he failed to mention that this bill doesn't deal with generation; it deals with what will be a successor natural monopoly. That's why we oppose the sale of Hydro One and oppose this bill, because it gives the government the power to make the decision when the Legislature's not sitting, to finalize the terms of that transaction in the dark of summer, shall we say, when they can't be questioned.

I must say, the good news is that because the government has so mishandled the pay issue at Hydro One with respect to the board and the senior officers, they probably won't privatize it. Thank goodness, some people here stood four-square against this initiative.

Ms Martel: I listened with great interest to what was said by the Conservative members and would say the following in response. It makes absolutely no sense at all to sell off an asset that generates income for the province of Ontario. The fact of the matter is that whatever the debt is—and if people want to get a real, honest idea of what that debt is; underline the word "honest"—they should look to the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp Web site, posted April 1, 1999, after this government reorganized the Hydro debt. If they want to get an honest view of the debt, which is far less than what the Minister of Energy would put out to you, they would also understand that every cent of that debt is going to be paid by hydro ratepayers in any event. It's not as if when we sell it, it goes away.

So if we're going to be paying for it anyway, we might as well keep the asset that generates revenue every year to be applied to the debt. That revenue stream that the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp speaks to is at least \$13.1 billion. That's the dedicated revenue stream. It makes no sense whatsoever to sell off something that generates money for us.

If people really want to look at what happens in other jurisdictions, our leader Howard Hampton made clear the case in both Manitoba and in Quebec, where their debt levels are higher than the province of Ontario. No one in Quebec and no one in Manitoba is talking about selling off those public utilities or those public assets, because they understand that those are valuable assets for the people of those provinces that make sure that rates are stable and that there is power at cost. That's what we should be doing in this province, too.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Northumberland has two minutes to respond.

Mr Galt: I was entertained with some of the responses that we were hearing. The member from Nickel Belt is talking about all this generation revenue that's going to be generated, this \$13 billion she is talking about. She didn't seem to mention the costs. I understand several billion dollars are currently needed by Hydro One to repair poles and upgrade a lot of the equipment they have. She seemed to ignore mentioning that aspect. I appreciate that generation can occur there, but you have to invest capital annually and you have all the operational costs. Should that exceed the revenue, that's hardly a profit. She ignored mentioning what the net profit on an annual basis might be. It's a net profit, not a net loss, that she really should have been speaking about if in fact that was the point she was making.

The member from Windsor-St Clair talked about what is really in the bill, but he didn't talk about the fact that the bill includes reforms to strengthen the Ontario Energy Board's powers against unfair marketing and retailing practices. He didn't talk about that fact that the bill will

enact a new energy consumers' bill of rights which would place new requirements on gas and electricity retailers dealing with consumers. He didn't mention that the bill provides the Ontario Energy Board with new enforcement powers. He overlooked mentioning that the bill strengthens the market surveillance powers of the IMO's market surveillance panel.

Also, there are amendments to the bill that would help protect our environment by strengthening the rules governing water power generators. Finally, the bill enables the government to establish an environmental information tracking and reporting system that would allow consumers to make informed choices about electricity offerings.

The Acting Speaker: I just wanted to remind the members that there are several opportunities for you to speak. You can get in touch with your House leader, your whip, and have debate. You have two minutes to do comments or questions, and you may get a response or whatever. That's all our rules allow. I just wanted to remind members that you have those opportunities and no others.

Further debate?

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Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): We're speaking here, debating Bill 58. It is called the blank-cheque bill. That is for a very good reason. It seeks to give the executive council a blank cheque to do what it wishes with the future of Hydro One. I want tonight in my time to talk about why the blank-cheque bill is an affront to our democracy, an affront to our parliamentary system. I also want to talk about the government's electrical storm that has been their path to privatization, it being on the table and then off the table and then back on the table, and the volatility that has caused in the entire electricity market on the generation side, which in turn has meant we are going to get less made-in-Ontario electricity because of the volatility caused by this government with respect to the way it has handled Hydro One—its sale or keeping it public. Last, I want to talk about why we need to keep Hydro One public, why we must keep the electricity transmission highway public.

First, we call this the blank-cheque bill. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals do, and I think members of the third party may have called it the blank-cheque bill as well. Pundits and commentators have also referred to it as the blank-cheque bill. You might ask why they would call it a blank-cheque bill. It's because it turns our parliamentary system on its head. Instead of the executive—the cabinet—coming to the Legislature to get support for a decision it has made, the executive is asking for a blank cheque from the Legislature to do what it wishes, either through a cabinet meeting or by passing an order in council, outside this Legislative chamber. Why does that matter? Is this an academic problem? Is this just a concern that will bedevil some political science examination question? I say no. This is not a hypothetical affront to our democracy and our parliamentary system; it is a very real affront to our democracy.

Let me just get to it right away. It is questionable that this government, executive council or cabinet—it's the same thing—that Premier Eves could come to this Legislature and get a majority of this Legislature to support the privatization of Hydro One. We know of at least five members of the government caucus who have expressed in published reports, one in the Legislature and one in the midst of a leadership debate, serious concerns about the privatization of electricity transmission. If there are five who have spoken out, it is quite possible that this cabinet could not get the support of the government caucus for privatization of Hydro One. If that were the case, then of course it couldn't get Hydro One privatized. In turn, they're not going to get the support from the official opposition or the third party, because we oppose the privatization.

So suddenly the government is faced with a choice. They can take the matter of the future of Hydro One to this Legislature, and get the people to decide the future of Hydro One—let the people get the last word—or they can do this, and this is the trick: the cabinet gets the last word, not the people. That way, all the government members can go home and say, "Well, I said in the caucus meeting that I was against it, but the cabinet made me do it."

Again, let's be clear: we have a parliamentary system where the executive—the government—introduces a bill, we go through stages of legislative debate and committee hearings and ultimately the Legislature passes or defeats a bill. Obviously, to some extent it can literally become an academic process in the sense that we know that government bills are going to be supported by the government. The government doesn't introduce a bill unless it knows it's got the support of its caucus and obviously the support of its cabinet. It won't introduce a bill unless it has that support.

So you have to ask yourself, "Why wouldn't they put what they want to do on the future of Hydro One before this Legislature?" The answer is that the government wants to avoid having the people have the last word on this, not for some crazy conspiratorial reason, but for the simple fact that the majority of Ontarians oppose the sale of Hydro One. How do you get around that if you want to sell Hydro One? Well, the government has figured out a way. They pass a blank-cheque bill which gives them the power to do what they can't do right now, that gives them the power to do what they could not do if they brought it to this Legislature. It truly turns our parliamentary process on its head. We're about to have a budget, probably next week—I'm looking for nodding from the cabinet over there, but I'm not getting any. We're going to have a budget next week.

Interjections.

Mr Bryant: The week after would be estimates. The budget has to be next week and estimates the week after, I think. Then there's the supply bill. Of course, the way the supply bill works is that it's the opportunity for the government—the executive council—which has explained its position through the estimates process, to come and

say to the Legislature, "We need to get your approval before we can start spending the people's money." That has been the case, at least, since the 16th century, since the English Bill of Rights—the people getting the last word instead of the monarchy getting the last word. In other words, Parliament has to agree before the crown starts spending the people's money.

To turn that on its head would involve the executive not having to come to the Legislature to get approval to spend the people's money. The whole purpose of the supply bill and the supply process and the appropriation process is to do that. Government—the cabinet—presents a budget, and the Legislature approves.

Again, more often than not it is just a formality. We know that; we know it's a formality. The cabinet, it's been said, is the buckle, the hyphen that connects the Legislature to the Parliament. Of course, in our system the members of the executive council are members of provincial Parliament; they are members of the Legislature. There are 24 of them. They are 24 important people; they're 24 powerful people; they're people who have control over ministries. But there are only 24 of them. In order for this Legislature to take something introduced by a minister and make it law, they have to bring it to this House and we get to vote on it. If the people at home don't like the way an MPP votes, they pick up the phone, they write an e-mail, they write a letter and they let the MPP know. Dollars to doughnuts there are a lot of MPPs on the government side of the House who have gotten a lot of calls and e-mails and letters and visits from constituents who have said, "For goodness' sake, don't sell off Hydro One."

In a democracy, at some point we get an election and those people who feel very strongly about it, who believe this is an election issue, will say to the PC MPP, "You voted for the sale of Hydro One. I'm opposed to that, and I'm not going to give you my support in this election." It's the way democracy works.

Here's why this blank-cheque bill is truly a perversion of our parliamentary process. The voters can't go to the PC MPPs and say, "You sold off Hydro One." Why? Because the MPPs are going to say, "The cabinet did it, actually; I didn't do it. I didn't do it; the cabinet did it. It was done by order in council. It happened during the World Cup," or "It happened in the middle of the World Series," or "It happened on a Friday afternoon; the announcement came out at 4 o'clock," or whatever. There's no opportunity for an MPP, in the ultimate expression of accountability, to say, "I voted for it," or "I voted against it."

What we want on this side of the House—

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): That's the way your party works. That's not how our party works.

Mr Bryant: The member says that's how our party works. Yes, we believe in democracy and you don't. That's how it works, I guess. Member for Halton, if your constituents in fact support the privatization of Hydro One, then you should be given the opportunity to vote for it. If they don't, and you vote in favour of the privatiza-

tion of Hydro One, then your constituents should have the opportunity to hold you to account. The problem with this bill is that it doesn't permit the people—the voters—to hold their members of provincial Parliament to account, because it gives the last word to the cabinet, not to the Legislature.

Again, in most circumstances that may only be of concern to a keen student of political science. But in this case I am saying the political reality is that the privatization of Hydro One, in whatever way, shape or form—through income trust, through a non-profit corporation, through an IPO, an initial public offering, through a strategic sale or through a lease, any of those options—whatever the privatization option that is undertaken by this government, I say it couldn't get through this Legislature. Why? It's extraordinary that we have had, again, five members of this Legislature remark in published reports, and there may be more, I don't know—they usually say something like having grave concerns about privatization. That means they are opposed to it.

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The Deputy Premier, Elizabeth Witmer, said in the leadership debate—remember?—that she had great concerns and that we should review electricity reform. Remember what the reaction was? Chris Stockwell was shocked. He said, "What? You were at the cabinet table with me when we made that decision and agreed to privatize Hydro One. The cabinet decision was made on December 6 that we're going to privatize Hydro One. So what happened?" She started to speak her mind because she was not shackled by the Emperor of North Bay. Now she's the Deputy Premier in a government that has introduced a bill that gives the cabinet the last word on this matter that otherwise could not get through this Legislature.

It's an affront to our democracy, it's a perversion of parliamentary system and it's wrong. It wouldn't matter what the subject matter was. It could be the privatization of Highway 407; it could be privatization of another government enterprise, corporation; it could be the privatization of another government service. It wouldn't matter. The people should have the last word. The Legislature should have the last word. Blank cheques should never be allowed.

Second, there has been an electricity storm that is the path of this government, en route through plans to privatize, derail plans to privatize, promises and confirmations to privatize. Then an incredible thing happens: privatization gets off the table and then goes back on the table. Then out of nowhere we get five different privatization options, plus it seems that the status quo is on the table and then off the table.

Then, in the midst of that, while the government is trying to convince everybody that privatization is off the table, the enterprise minister, the former Deputy Premier, Mr Flaherty, says, "No, the IPO, the privatization of Hydro One, is on the table." That didn't go over well, so I guess there were dinners planned and cancelled. But in any event, suddenly, despite the fact that during the by-election and in the days leading up to the by-election the

Premier very clearly said that privatization was off the table, when the by-election was over—guess what?—it was back on the table. In fact, the government let it be known that it wanted to give itself the executive power to privatize Hydro One—again, the problem being the perversion of our democracy. The people of North Bay have had a say as to what they thought about the privatization of Hydro One. They were told by the Premier of Ontario that privatization was off the table, that the IPO was off the table. It was on the front page of newspapers. Hydro One IPO “Off the Table.” People read that and they said, “Phew, because I don’t want that.” Ontarians don’t want the privatization of Hydro One. We know that. You know that because you’ve heard it in your constituency offices. And yes, there have been polls that have confirmed it, but we all know that in this House. We know. Of course there are some people who support it, but we know that the vast majority of the people we represent, who elected us here, do not support the privatization of Hydro One. But the government wasn’t going to take their chances and test that. They said, “Hydro One is off the table for now.” Then, after the by-election, it was on the table.

Quickly, here’s the timeline:

On December 6, cabinet meets to discuss the opening of the electricity market to competition. Later on discussion is entered into, we understand from media reports. We don’t know because, again—this is the problem—we don’t get to sit in on cabinet meetings, so we don’t know how the decision is made. Cabinet secrecy has its purposes. I’m taking a run at that. I’m just saying that that’s not the place to decide whether or not to privatize Hydro One.

On December 12, Premier Harris announces that they’ve instructed SuperBuild to privatize Hydro One. That will be accomplished through an initial public offering.

On January 15, 2002, the deadline for underwriters to apply for leading Hydro One IPO comes and goes. The next week, CEO Eleanor Clitheroe says she’s ready to lead Hydro One into the IPO.

On February 5, the Globe and Mail publishes a poll saying that the vast majority of Ontarians do not support the privatization of Hydro One—but anyway.

On February 13, the now Deputy Premier, the Honourable Elizabeth Witmer, in her leadership campaign declares that she would review the electricity reform plans of the government, and now-energy minister Chris Stockwell is shocked and says, “You were at the table with me. You supported that. How can you turn your back on that now?”

Well, well, it looks in some ways like she was a leader. She then became a follower, but she was a leader in some ways at that moment, because it turned out that at one point later on in the history of this Mr Eves and Mr Stockwell said that keeping Hydro One public was on the table—but only during the by-election, by the way.

Then Mr Justice Gans ruled, on April 19, that in fact the IPO was illegal, that the government had no statutory authority to proceed with the IPO. This is interesting.

On April 23, finance minister Ecker says that the sale of Hydro One will go ahead despite the legal setback. The Premier confirms that.

On April 25, the Premier says in a statement to the media that the government will hold hearings about the sale of Hydro One, even though it has already decided to sell Hydro One. That was a weird one.

On the April 26, Premier Eves says he will appeal the Gans decision and that the sale of Hydro One must go ahead, to which I say, why would you appeal it and legislate it? Why would you not do what the government always does, which is to let the courts come to a final determination on the future of Hydro One and then, if the government wishes to respond, to respond? Instead, we’re going to have a hearing on June 17 on a matter that is currently already before the Legislature. The government doesn’t do that with other bills. The Attorney General called it foolhardy to do so with respect to a private member’s bill that was currently before the Court of Appeal—but not with this bill.

On May 1, “Sale of Hydro One off the table,” says the Premier. Ha. It’s the April Fool’s Day joke on the voters and it’s May Day for the future of Hydro One, because the next day, May 2, was a by-election. The headline was there for the by-election and, lo and behold, the voters went to the polls fooled into thinking that the Hydro One IPO, the sale of Hydro One, was not going to take place.

They were wrong, because of course, lo and behold, on May 29 this bill, the blank-cheque bill, gets introduced.

Last, I say to you that we must stop this blank-cheque bill from proceeding, not just because it’s an affront to democracy but because we must keep Hydro One public. Hydro One, the electricity transmission highway, is just too important to risk leaving the priority of our electricity transmission highway to a board whose fiduciary duty is not to the public but rather to the private shareholders. We cannot let shareholder value trump public interest. Ultimately, that’s why we cannot privatize the electricity transmission highway.

However, there’s more. Hydro One is a natural money-maker. It’s a natural monopoly because it’s the only stream down which electricity can be transported and it makes hundreds of millions of dollars a year for provincial coffers. So we cannot sell Hydro One. We must keep it public, and we must stop this blank-cheque bill from ever passing.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Kormos: I listened to the member, and he’s standing in his place and debating the bill, and he has indicated that he’s opposed to it, and that’s good. He’s calling upon the government to produce what even five people with some guts—and that’s a good thing too. But I would ask the member to please express some of those same concerns to his colleague from Sudbury, because the member from St Paul’s has a colleague who supports government bills all the time. The member for Sudbury, Mr Bartolucci, is always jumping to his feet saying, “Pass government bills, second and third reading, with no

debate." The member from St Paul's likes debating government bills. He likes opposing them. But his colleague from Sudbury, who calls himself a Liberal as well, the member's colleague from Sudbury, Mr Bartolucci, wants to pass more government bills. Mr Bartolucci wants to pass those bills without any debate. Mr Bartolucci wants to pass them, second and third reading—boom, boom—in one afternoon or one evening. The record shows it. Over and over and over again, Mr Bartolucci's up in this House advocating for the Tories, trying to get Tory legislation passed, trying to prevent people from debating against Tory legislation.

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I agree with the member from St Paul's. I want to find five Tory backbenchers with the guts or the gonads to say no to this legislation. But I ask the member for St Paul's to speak to his colleague from Sudbury and say to Mr Bartolucci, "Rick, you've got to stop supporting the Tory legislation. Rick, you've got to stop advancing the Tory agenda. Rick, you've got to let us know, are you really a Liberal, or are you a Liberal who deep inside is really a Tory? Because, Rick, you're spending as much time trying to advance the government's legislative agenda as the government House leader is. No, Rick, you're spending more time. Rick Bartolucci, you're investing more energy in advancing the government's legislative agenda than the government House leader is. The government House leader seeks unanimous consent less often than you do, Rick." Please, Mike, talk to Rick. We've got to find out: is he a Liberal or is he a Tory?

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Most of the time I actually enjoy listening to the very eloquent oration, sometimes emotive and hammish, of the member for St Paul's, but I have to admit to being somewhat bemused this evening because I really don't know what he said. I appreciate that it is the role of the opposition to oppose, but I also happen to believe it's the role of the opposition in a democratic system to offer alternative solutions. It's interesting, because I didn't hear that once in the 20-minute submission from the member for St Paul's.

Interjection.

Ms Mushinski: Oh, was it a 10-minute submission? It sounded like 20 minutes.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): It was a painful 20 minutes.

Ms Mushinski: Yes, I appreciate your saying it was painful, but I'll let you say that. I usually, as I say, am quite amused by the somewhat eloquent style of the member for St Paul's.

In listening to what Mr Kormos was saying, it was interesting that he suggested that there may be one member of the Liberal caucus considering jumping and coming across to this side. Actually, on December 12, 2001, we thought the Leader of the Opposition—his name is Mr McGuinty—was also considering coming to this side, because he was the one who said he actually supported the privatization of Hydro One.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I listened very carefully to the member from St Paul's. As always, he makes a great deal of sense. His major point is, how was this decision arrived at that suddenly we're confronted by the possibility of selling Hydro One, the transmission system? How did we arrive at this? Was this in the blue book? Was it in the red book? Was it in the green book? No, it was in no book, and suddenly we're faced with the decision that only one person now can shed some light on. Do you know who that is?

Mr Kormos: Dalton.

Mr Ruprecht: No, that person is the Premier of this province, because that decision was made between the present Premier of this province and the Premier who had just left us. No one else is able to throw some light on this decision except him.

Let me just turn the limelight on Mr Kormos himself. Guess what happened to us in our riding of Davenport one nice day? I thought we were together in fighting this government. I thought we were together in fighting to stop the sale of Hydro. Suddenly, when I organized a demonstration, right in Davenport riding, on the corner of St Clair and Dufferin, I saw this great big bus with a big sign on it circling this demonstration. Guess who jumped out of that bus? You guessed it. It was Mr Kormos and Shelley Martel. You know what? Up to that point, I thought we were on the same side. I of course invited them to speak. I said, "Come and address the audience." Both of them refused to come. Instead they handed out leaflets against us.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member's time has expired.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I want you to keep quiet.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I want you to pay attention, because somebody missed it. I said there are three opportunities for you to speak. One is to get your whip or government House leader to get you on the debate time. The other is during questions and comments. The other is in response. There is no provision for any other talking within our rules. You have appointed me to enforce your rules.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: I'll not warn those members again. You have asked me to enforce the rules for you, and believe me, I'll do it.

Ms Martel: Speaker, I am provoked, especially with respect to the comments of the last member. Look, my friend, you thought we were on the same side? No, we are on the side of keeping Hydro in public hands. That is the side that New Democrats are on. You are on the side of the Conservatives. Let me just provide you with some proof of that.

Here is what Dalton McGuinty had to say with respect to the sale, the privatization of Hydro One on December 12, 2001: "Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty said privatizing Hydro One was the right move but should have been done following an open debate in the Legislature."

Dalton got caught again on Global last week, because they have the actual clip with his face, and coming out of his mouth was, "Yes, we support the privatization of Hydro One." Your position is the same as theirs.

Let me talk to you about deregulation, because with respect to deregulation the Liberal position is the same as the Conservative position. Here's a comment from Dalton McGuinty, February 5, 2001, the Larry Silver Show. "We believe you've got to go toward deregulation. That's the way to bring this to heel. That's the way to introduce real competition." Dalton McGuinty, October 31, in a big fundraising letter, \$350 a plate, to the energy sector: "Throughout Ontario's electricity restructuring process, Dalton and the Ontario Liberals have been consistent supporters of the move to an open electricity market in Ontario."

Interjections.

Ms Martel: Folks, the Liberal position is the same as the Tories': privatize Hydro One, deregulate the energy market and privatize the electricity assets. Only New Democrats want to keep power in public hands.

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The Acting Speaker: I'll try this in English this time. I'll not warn the members for Davenport, Niagara Centre, Halton, Northumberland or Scarborough Centre again.

The Chair recognizes the member for St Paul's for a two-minute response.

Mr Bryant: I thank the members for Niagara Centre, Scarborough Centre, Davenport and Nickel Belt for their comments.

The member for Scarborough Centre said that I didn't suggest any alternatives. That actually is not at all accurate. I talked about keeping Hydro One public. We have an alternative to the government vision of privatization. It's pretty clear. You keep Hydro One public. Let me go slow. We would keep Hydro One public. That's the alternative to the government position.

The New Democrats in 1997, through their representative Floyd Laughren and the select committee on electricity reform, said of electricity deregulation—do you know what they said? Floyd Laughren said he is open to competition in the electricity marketplace. Then there is a final opinion from the NDP caucus in 1997, and do you know what they said? They said they supported reform of electricity generation. They supported that. That was in 1997. Then votes were held, decisions were made, hearings were held. But now that the New Democrats are in a position—I don't know what the word is—of some desperation, they've discovered religion when it comes to keeping our electricity generation public.

The government, on the other hand—and I don't know if I can do this in 25 seconds, but I'll try. Remember, on December 1 they were in favour of privatization. Then in April they were told they can't do it. Later in April, the finance minister flip-flopped and said they were in favour of privatization. Then the Premier said that he was in favour of it. But then a by-election was called and then he said it was off the table. Then after the by-election, it was on the table. Then Flaherty flipped and he said that

in fact it's on. But now they say it's off, and now we've got a blank-cheque bill before us and we don't know where the government's going.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate?

Ms Mushinski: I will be sharing my time this evening with the honourable member for Halton.

I'd like to start off by saying quite clearly that this government is totally committed to ensuring a safe, reliable supply of electricity to Ontarians. If we look at the track record of the 10 lost years, clearly they were not as committed as we are to making sure we're committed to a safe, reliable supply of electricity at the lowest possible cost. Clearly, we are committed to looking after the interests of our consumers, which is something that I do not believe has been demonstrated by either the NDP or the Liberal governments of the past.

We are moving toward that commitment. Just over a month ago, we successfully opened our retail and wholesale markets to competition, completing the first step in our plan to restructure Ontario's electricity system. I'd say we're off to a very good start, notwithstanding the fact that members of the opposition, such as the one from St Paul's, who is just walking out right now, suggested that the sky was going to fall and rates were going to go through the roof.

Last week we took the next step in our plan for our electricity sector by introducing the Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act. If passed by this Legislature, it would allow us to determine the future of Hydro One. Why are we doing this? We're doing this essentially to address a recent decision on Hydro One by the Ontario Superior Court and to ensure that the strongest consumer protections are in place for electricity consumers and the environment. The decision by the Ontario Superior Court on April 19 determined that section 48 of the Electricity Act restricts the crown's right to determine the future of Hydro One.

On April 25, Premier Ernie Eves announced the government's three-pronged approach and response to the Superior Court decision. They included public consultations to receive constructive feedback from the people of Ontario, an appeal to the courts to clarify issues around the interpretation of existing legislation, and introduction of legislation that would clarify the province's authority to dispose of its Hydro One shares, if it so chooses.

We're doing all three. In keeping with our goals, Environment and Energy Minister Stockwell consulted widely with the public and electricity stakeholders. He travelled across the province, between April 20 and May 8, to 10 different cities in order to listen to people's views on Hydro One and electricity issues. He asked for advice, specifically on how to pay down the old Ontario Hydro debt, and we have all heard many times how much that is. He also asked how to ensure adequate investment in our wires network. He asked for advice on how to protect jobs in Ontario, and I think that's something we all collectively share in this House; how to ensure that transmission and distribution rates remain reasonable; how to

make sure that our citizens will benefit from any transactions relating to Hydro One; how to ensure that Hydro One is efficient; how to enhance the safety and reliability of our transmission and distribution systems; and lastly, how to ensure that Ontario citizens continue to have a say.

During this nine-day consultation, the government listened carefully to what Ontarians had to say about proposed legislation. Hundreds of interested groups and individuals offered what we believe to be constructive ideas, and we received hundreds of faxes and e-mails from across Ontario, which helped us to draft the legislation before us today. These consultations confirmed that the direction we're taking with our electricity sector addresses the concerns of many people. And the consultations allowed us to explain to Ontarians why our electricity sector needs to be restructured.

It's no secret that the old Ontario Hydro has served us well for many, many years and delivered below-average prices for electricity. But of course, as we all know, it's run into problems. Unfortunately, that did seem to be a secret, and many people were not aware of how serious the problem has become. Between 1983 and 1993, the price of electricity almost doubled, increasing by 94%. Debt and other liabilities ballooned from \$12 billion in 1980 to more than \$38 billion by 1999.

Throughout the 1990s, more than 35% of every electricity bill in Ontario paid for debt interest. To provide some stability and protection for customers, electricity rates were frozen between 1993, to the NDP's credit, and 2001. But this solution, obviously, could only be a temporary measure.

Meanwhile, as we all know, the debt kept growing, and needed investment in the transmission and distribution was neglected as resources were poured into the generation side. It was clear then that our electricity system that had for so long been an economic advantage was now at risk of becoming a competitive disadvantage that would, we know, drive away jobs and investment from Ontario. We simply could not let that happen.

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In 1995, our government made the commitment to stop this spiralling debt and these high costs and put a plan in place to restructure Ontario's electricity sector. In 1996, we asked former federal Liberal finance minister Donald Macdonald to head up a committee and consult with Ontarians. His report, *A Framework for Competition*, recommended major changes to our electricity sector.

After receiving the Macdonald report, the government issued its white paper, called *Direction for Change: Charting a Course for Competitive Electricity and Jobs in Ontario*. It was our blueprint for change in our electricity sector, and it endorsed many of the directions proposed by the Macdonald committee.

Next, we brought industry and consumer experts together to design a new, competitive electricity market, which would benefit customers. In October 1998, the Energy Competition Act was proclaimed after much

public debate and input. This transformed the old Ontario Hydro into two main commercial companies: Ontario Power Generation, called OPG, and Hydro One, which would operate in a reformed and more effective regulatory framework. It also created a new regulatory body, the Independent Electricity Market Operator, also known as the IMO, and strengthened the powers of the Ontario Energy Board to ensure that consumers would be protected.

We were able to eliminate the much-criticized practices of having the old Ontario Hydro regulate itself and of having the transmission wires operated by the same company that owned virtually all the generating plants.

Today, Hydro One owns and operates this province-wide electricity transmission grid and owns local distribution systems serving more than 1.2 million customers across Ontario. Hydro One and the other 94 local distribution companies are what are called natural monopolies, subject to independent regulation by the Ontario Energy Board and the Independent Electricity Market Operator.

The OEB regulates and approves transmission and distribution rates, and their performance-based regulation will provide incentives for Hydro One and the other utilities to lower costs and share savings with customers.

The IMO must, by law, protect the interests of consumers with respect to the reliability and quality of electricity service in the province. The IMO ensures the efficient, safe and reliable operation of the market, while the OEB ensures fair competition.

Not surprisingly, self-regulation by the old monopoly was ineffective, in large part because of an inherent conflict of interest. The new, strengthened regulatory regime puts Hydro One's transmission and distribution businesses under independent regulation on a level playing field with other transmitters and distributors in Ontario. Under the new system, no matter who owns the transmission, distribution, retailing or generation businesses in Ontario, the OEB licenses all of them, including those already owned by the private sector.

Clearly, we've gone a long way to fixing the problems of the past: we've restructured the electricity market and introduced competition, we've ensured an efficient supply of electricity that is competitively priced for the people of Ontario and in the international marketplace and we have tabled legislation that is designed to clarify the province's ability to pursue a variety of options for Hydro One's future that would best meet the province's electricity goals.

Whatever the decision on Hydro One, we will continue our public consultations, keeping our promise to allow the people of Ontario to have a say in the future of their transmission and distribution system. Based on this input, the government will respond with the best course of action that achieves our goals for Hydro One.

I'll now pass the floor over to the member for Halton.

Mr Chudleigh: The opposition and many people are asking why this government is proceeding with legislation on Hydro One. I think it's very basic to anyone in

this province or anyone who owns anything in this province. The question is: who owns Hydro One?

Justice Gans made a decision a little while ago. In my mind, it was a very questionable decision. If you own your house, you have a right to sell it. But Justice Gans made a decision that said, "Yes, you own this entity, Hydro One, but you cannot sell it." That goes against the most basic tenets of a free society.

I think it's incumbent on the government, and on anyone who is in charge of the government at the time, to correct that decision by a judge, which, in my opinion, was very questionable indeed and, you might say, wrong. If it was your house, your farm or your car, and all of a sudden somebody said, "You can't sell it," obviously you would go to the courts. If you were in the Legislature, you would introduce legislation that says, "Yes, we can sell it. Yes, we can. We can do what we want with the property the people of Ontario own." It doesn't say we're going to sell it. It doesn't say we're going to put an income trust in place. It doesn't say we're going to do anything with it. What it does say is that we're going to clarify who owns Hydro One, and we're going to clarify it by saying the people of Ontario own Hydro One and that we, as their representatives, can take action on their behalf after due consultation and the proper legislation is passed in this House.

Obviously, our first priority in meeting our objectives is to ensure that Ontario's electricity customers are protected. We have made that clear from day one, when we put electricity customers first in designing our new market. Electricity customers are obviously the consumers of Ontario, who, I point out, are also the voters of Ontario. But they're also the businesses of Ontario. It's extremely important to the economy of Ontario that we have competitive electricity costs. Without competitive electricity costs, we will not get new industry, especially industry that is dependent on using large quantities of electricity—a fairly clean power source—to locate in this province. Of course, when business locates in this province, it affects our economy.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): And jobs.

Mr Chudleigh: We get new jobs out of that. The nice thing about new jobs, when you're in government, is that every new job means the employees pay taxes. They pay taxes to the province of Ontario; they pay taxes to the government of Canada. When they get their paycheque from a new job, they buy things. When they buy things, they pay the provincial sales tax, which generates revenue for Ontario.

Mr Stewart: The ripple effect.

Mr Chudleigh: The ripple effect creates more jobs. They buy gasoline and pay gasoline tax. Everything they buy creates economic activity, and that economic activity creates a better province.

Ms Mushinski: It creates wealth.

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Mr Chudleigh: It creates wealth in the province and the ability for the province of Ontario to more beneficially effect the things Ontarians want from their gov-

ernment; for instance, more money in health care and education.

That's why this government, in its tax cuts, has been able to create tax revenues that have put over eight billion new dollars into health care. At the same time the federal government over there has been cutting money from health care in Ontario, we have been not only—

Mr Stewart: Did you say \$8 billion?

Mr Chudleigh: More than \$8 billion has been put back into health care so that Ontarians can have the health care they expect and the health care they want, when and where they need it. That's why we've made such tremendous improvements, because every time we get a new job we get that tax revenue.

The electricity business is extremely important to getting new businesses to locate here. So, yes, we want to make sure that electricity is available to Ontarians and that it is available at a reasonable cost.

We made a commitment to fix the problems of the past and to safeguard our future in electricity supply and to ensure that safe, reliable power will continue to be supplied to consumers—individual customers and businesses—at competitive cost.

Much has been made about our open-market system. It's interesting to look at the hourly rate in May. Prior to the open-market system we were paying 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. It would be nice to have a little flip chart here; we could write all these numbers down. Since we've opened up the market, the lowest hourly rate that we've had in the month of May was 0.78. It was 4.3 before. The lowest rate we've had is 0.78.

Mr Stewart: That's lower.

Mr Chudleigh: It's extremely low, a little over three quarters of a cent per hour. The highest rate we've paid, to be fair, was 10.05 cents per kilowatt hour. It's quite a bit higher and that was a spike during May.

Mr Beaubien: What's the daily average?

Mr Chudleigh: My friend from Petrolia asks, "What's the daily average?" The daily average is 2.9 cents, compared to 4.3. That's what the open market does.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I'm quite happy to have the opportunity to comment on comments made by the member for Scarborough Centre and the member for Halton.

It's interesting to hear the member for Halton talk about why the province is going to court. The province is going to court to clarify who owns Hydro One. I don't know what there is to clarify there, honourable member. I think it's quite clear. We, the citizens of Ontario, own Hydro One. We, the citizens of Ontario, are the owners of Hydro One. But they don't understand that. Why would you go to court to clarify who owns it when we own it? We, collectively in this Legislature, 103 members, 12 million people in this province, own Hydro One. So why would you go try and clarify that?

Then the honourable member for Scarborough Centre talks about consultations. What a joke. These consultations are following the track record of this province that

we've seen over and over again, consultations that are invitation-only consultations.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Peters: —She says they went out to 10 cities to get people's views. But I can tell you, I spoke with people who wanted to attend the consultations in London who were turned away at the door. What kind of public consultation is that?

Then we have the honourable member who is the Minister of Environment and Energy, who walks out of the consultations in London. So how can those be public consultations when the minister won't even sit and listen to what's being talked about?

You talk about fixing the problems of the past. You talk about the debt. When did the biggest problems start with Ontario Hydro and Hydro One and its successor companies? They started many years ago. They started with the Bill Davis government, with the Frank Miller government, they continued through with the Bob Rae government when they froze it. Those debts started in the early days. The roots of this debt are with the Conservative government.

Interjections.

Mr Stewart: Oh, give me a break.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Peterborough and member for Lambton, I'll not warn you again.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: I'm naming the member for Peterborough, Gary Stewart.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: I'm naming the member for Niagara Centre, Peter Kormos.

Mr Stewart and Mr Kormos were escorted from the chamber.

Ms Martel: I wanted to comment on the input from the member for Scarborough Centre, because she took the time to describe at great length the consultation process that Minister Stockwell had been involved in and how he went to these 10 communities and listened to what people had to say and how, based on what people had to say, he brought this forward and all of this appears in the bill.

I think it's worth reminding the members of the Conservative Party in particular and the people who are watching tonight that if it hadn't been for two trade unions—CEP and CUPE—we wouldn't be here having one single moment, one single second of debate on the privatization of Hydro One. It was only because those two trade unions took this issue to court and in court Justice Gans agreed that the government had no power whatsoever to be selling an asset of the people that the government was then actually forced to have some hearings and that we are now in the position that we are today.

This is a government that on December 12—it might have been earlier in December, before that date—just announced its intention to privatize, even though it hadn't been part of the Electricity Competition Act and even

though the former minister had said very clearly during the debate on that act that the government had no intention of privatizing Hydro One. But the announcement was made and the prospectus went in. The government had no intention of making a referral to the Ontario Energy Board for a public hearing on the matter. The government had no intention whatsoever to hear from the people about this important issue. It was only because those two trade unions thought something was so wrong that they took it to court and we're here today dealing with this.

The consultations were an exercise in futility, because the government had already made up its mind about privatization. They just got caught in court.

Mr Galt: I certainly appreciated the comments of the member for Nickel Belt. There's been so much talk about privatizing. Earlier I heard talk about privatizing electricity and privatizing water. But really we have to talk about whether this is competition versus monopoly and not so much this public versus private. We have to start looking at this in very different kinds of ways.

I remember them talking earlier about revenues and how much revenue was coming in from Hydro One and what that was doing and how they would add it, and talking about other jurisdictions and their revenues. I heard them talking earlier about Quebec and what was happening there. There is a very different situation here.

I notice the opposition is not talking about what's currently happening in California or Alberta. They like to talk about what happened in a crisis situation in California, when a gas line blew up. There was a shortage of gas. There was a tremendous demand in Silicon Valley for power. There was a transmission grid that couldn't supply the state—

Interjection.

Mr Galt: Yes, it did go way up.

We were down there in February. The production of power was at 3 cents. That would convert to roughly the 4.3 cents in Canadian dollars that was being charged for electricity here. The price did go up in Alberta for a period of time, when there was a high demand for natural gas. But we were in Alberta in February and it was back to a reasonable price, as I remember. The production was something like 2.8 cents. So it's a very different scenario from what the opposition likes to present.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Halton has two minutes to respond.

Mr Chudleigh: It was interesting to hear the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London ask the question, "Who owns Ontario Hydro?" Of course he said, "The people of Ontario own Ontario Hydro," which most people in Ontario would agree with, all those people except Justice Gans, who disagrees with that concept. Justice Gans was the one who said that perhaps the people of Ontario don't own it and they can't sell it. If you don't own it, you can't sell it.

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There's some confusion. That's what this legislation is going to do and perhaps the member will understand that;

at some later date it'll sink in. It takes a while sometimes, but I think they'll come—Dalton decided on December 12 that privatizing Hydro One was a good idea and sometime later he decided it wasn't a good idea. We're not exactly sure how he feels about it right today, but we think it falls somewhere between being a good idea and not being a good idea. It's in that ballpark somewhere.

The member for Nickel Belt talked about consulting. It's amazing. In the almost seven years I've been in this House, I've noticed one thing: the NDP never has enough time for consultation. I suppose that's good in some things. In other things, I think that eventually you have to make a decision and get on with it. As the member for Scarborough pointed out, the consultation on this bill has been rather exhaustive.

The member for Northumberland made some excellent comments about the way in which our party has gone about these consultations and has created the kind of atmosphere where Hydro One will be—

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate?

Mr Caplan: I am pleased to speak to Bill 58 today on behalf of all the people of Don Valley East. I will be sharing the time with the member from Essex.

If there has been only one issue in my riding—there have been many—that people have been very crystal clear about, it's their real concern about the sale of Hydro One.

Back in March, I hosted a very successful town hall public meeting at Milne Valley school in Don Valley East. Over 250 people attended. They turned out to express their very valid anxieties. What was most interesting to me was that many of these people didn't vote for me. They were Conservatives. They voted for the Conservative government and they were shocked at what is going on. Those people see a government trying to sell off Hydro without any mandate and they were angry.

People who have never been active on any political issue have been inundating me with petitions, letters and e-mails against the sale of this asset. Without exaggerating, every day I get at least one phone call insisting that I oppose at every step the way this issue has been handled and oppose this sale. I agree with my constituents in Don Valley East. The government has clearly overstepped the boundaries of its mandate.

I did a little bit of research. I looked at the 1995 election document of the Progressive Conservative Party. They said in their so-called Common Sense Revolution:

"Marketable provincial assets will be transferred to an arm's-length corporation charged with their sale. Strict criteria will be established for selecting which assets we sell, and rigid guidelines will be established for protecting the public interest."

"When a deal for a sale is made, it will be independently reviewed. A rigorous conflict-of-interest policy will be enforced and the entire process will be open to scrutiny by the Legislature and the public."

What a joke, what hollow words, because we know that's not going to happen here. The point of Bill 58 is to

enable the government to act, a blank cheque if you will, without the scrutiny of the Legislature and/or the public. I want to read to you the operative section of Bill 58. It is section 50 and it says:

"50(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may cause corporations to be incorporated under the Business Corporations Act...."

"(2) The minister, on behalf of Her Majesty in right of Ontario, may acquire, hold, dispose of and otherwise deal with securities or debt obligations of, or any other interest in, a corporation incorporated pursuant to subsection (1)."

"50.1(1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council," which means the cabinet behind closed doors, "may cause corporations or other entities to be established or arrangements to be made for the purpose of acquiring, holding, disposing of or otherwise dealing with directly or indirectly,

"(a) securities, assets, liabilities, rights, obligations, revenues and income of Hydro One...; and

"(b) interests in or entitlements to those securities, assets, liabilities, rights, obligations, revenues and income."

In plain words, they want a blank cheque to be able to sell Hydro One.

We know that public scrutiny is not the modus operandi of Ernie Eves or of the Conservative government. They talk about openness, but it's just that, it's just talk. They pass bills, like Bill 58, to ensure that their sell-offs are done under the cover of confidentiality agreements and without review of the Legislature.

What else did the government say when they were running for office? What did they promise when they sought a mandate for the people of Ontario? On page 20 of their 1999 election document, their so-called Blueprint, not surprisingly we're finding that many of the things government owns aren't needed any more: "Over the next five years, we'll maximize taxpayers' value by selling surplus land, buildings and other non-essential holdings that are tying up our precious resources."

Is that the case with Hydro One? It makes \$300 million in profit per year. It goes into the coffers of the province of Ontario. Is that why the government is planning to sell it off? Is it because the asset is no longer needed? Clearly, no. Is it because it's draining provincial revenues? Clearly, no. Is it because the government is desperate for money to pay for their tax cuts for corporations? Clearly, yes. It's the same reason they sold off Highway 407: they needed the money. They had no regard for the long-term implications of their decision then, nor do they now.

It's not an acceptable reason. It's not acceptable to me and it's not acceptable to the people of Don Valley East.

I will not be supporting this legislation because I cannot endorse the efforts of the government to hide their true intentions. Instead, I support the vision of Dalton McGuinty when it comes to the ownership of the transmission grid in Ontario. I too want to keep the ownership of Ontario's electricity highway where it belongs: in

public hands. Selling Ontario's hydro grid will not benefit consumers. I agree with Dalton McGuinty when he says that Ontario's transmission grid, located in the heart of North America, is one of the province's most valuable assets.

Ernie Eves and his Tory cronies have not presented any business case—and we have pressed both the Premier and the Minister of Energy to present such a case—for the sale of the grid and why it would be in the best interests of Ontarians. We all know that the point of the sale is that it will generate huge fees for Bay Street brokers and huge profits and payouts for Hydro One executives. Keeping the transmission grid in public hands means the public sector controls access to the grid. This strengthens the regulation of a new electricity marketplace since it will prevent generators from purchasing the grid and maintaining it so-called strategically, favouring their own generation assets.

Another concern is that in the post-September 11 world, acts of sabotage and terrorism targeting vital operations are all too possible. The protection of Ontario's electrical nervous system, the transmission system, should remain a public responsibility, in public hands and for public security.

In 1999, Mike Harris and the Tory government said that the private operator of Highway 407 would not be permitted to raise tolls more than three cents per kilometre over the next 15 years. On January 1, 2002, tolls increased for the fourth time since the highway was sold; charges for trips taken between midnight and 6 am have jumped from six cents to almost 12 cents. When Chris Stockwell in his leadership campaign was talking about this, he said there was no business case for the sale of Highway 407. The same is true with the transmission grid. The same is true with Hydro One. It's another example of a Conservative government pursuing goals that are not in the public interest, and it's giving itself the power to do so while people aren't looking, under the cover of darkness. In the middle of the summer they'll make a decision. They'll fill in the blank cheque. The cheque should say, "To the Progressive Conservative Party from the people of Ontario."

Most bills in this Legislature are now dominated by clauses giving the Premier and the cabinet the power to make regulations whenever they want, however they want. It's the keys to their bills. Once again, the government is passing a law and saying, "Trust me." I know that the people of Don Valley East and I certainly don't trust them any more.

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I want to present to members of the Legislature some of the comments and a chronology of events that have taken place over the last few months or so.

After he'd been elected, Ernie Eves said in the April 26 Ottawa Citizen, "I believe it's important that Hydro One be privatized," Mr Eves told reporters following back-to-back emergency cabinet and caucus meetings yesterday." But then on May 1, just before a by-election

in Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, I would add, in which he was running to be elected to this Legislature: "Premier Ernie Eves says the sale of transmission giant Hydro One is 'off the table for the immediate time being' and that he is not necessarily wedded to the idea of selling it off after all."

Then on May 15, Chris Stockwell says, "We're looking at all avenues, all options. Nothing is off the table except the status quo. It can't continue to operate the way it's operating now."

The most interesting comment was in a May 31 interview, when Jim Wilson said, "Every time we expressed our abhorrence" about the compensation packages for the Hydro One executives, "they would increase" their own exit packages. "It went from bad to worse.... Wilson said he was aware of" the exit packages "two years ago, but says it was lower then. Her salary was about \$1 million then, and if she left—just as she does now—she would get three times her salary."

My question is, if they knew that this abhorrent situation was taking place, what action did the government take? Clearly, they didn't take any until they were caught, until they were caught red-handed by Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party, until we revealed those facts in the Legislature. Premier Eves knew about this over two years ago, then as Minister of Finance. Chris Stockwell, a member of the cabinet, knew. They did nothing to protect Ontario consumers. They're doing nothing to protect Ontario taxpayers now.

Bill 58 is a bad bill. It should be defeated. I hope all members of this House will do so. I certainly will vote against it.

I'm now going to turn the floor over to my colleague from Essex.

Mr Crozier: In the few minutes I have left this evening, I want to very simply say a couple of things. I don't know anybody on Bay Street. I couldn't name anybody who works a couple of streets over and downtown. I don't know anybody who has a vested interest in grabbing one of the major energy lifelines in this province so they can make a profit from it. I do know that I represent a whole bunch of ordinary people who live in southwestern Ontario in my constituency. If it were up to them, we wouldn't even be here debating this bill tonight, because if it were up to them, Hydro One would not be for sale. It's as simple as that. In their minds, it simply should not be sold.

Earlier this evening, there was some talk about owning Hydro One. I think we all agree that we know the citizens of Ontario own Hydro One. The question at the present time seems to be, do they have the right to sell Hydro One? I don't know whether the comparison is fair, but it may be like you owning your house but not having the title to it, and you couldn't sell it until that title was straightened up.

Herein lies some of the confusion of those who have watched this debate over the past few weeks. If the government of the province of Ontario, Ernie Eves,

believes it has the right to sell Hydro One, then that's a good reason that he should appeal the decision of the judge who indicated that we don't have that right. There again, we wouldn't have to be here debating this bill. We'd simply wait for the appeal to be heard, and if the government is right, the original judgment would be overturned. If, on the other hand, the government doesn't know whether it has the right to sell Hydro One, why go through the cost and time of the appeal? Why not simply deal with this bill before us and, in the words of some, clarify that right?

So people are confused about why you're doing both at the same time, notwithstanding the fact that if you really wanted to simplify it, you simply wouldn't sell Hydro One.

And what's going to happen if it is sold? Right now it's a monopoly in the hands of the citizens of Ontario. If it's sold, it's going to become a private monopoly; it's going to be under the Business Corporations Act, but it'll still be a private monopoly.

It would appear, since we're dealing with this bill tonight, that the government that considers itself the great manager, back on the infamous date of December 12, 2001, didn't know whether it had the right to sell Hydro One or not. And I find that absolutely amazing, that Mike Harris would stand up and say, "We're going to sell Hydro One," and do you know what? He apparently didn't even know whether he had the right to do it or not. Whether a court's going to decide that or whether legislation's going to decide it, he didn't know at the time.

Something else that confuses the constituents in my area is what is really the intent of the government? Mike Harris said, "We're going to sell Hydro One." Ernie Eves, I believe, in the campaign—though I must admit I

didn't watch it too carefully—said, "Yes, Hydro One should be sold." Our now Minister of Education, Ms Witmer, thought we should stand back and take a look at it: "Maybe it shouldn't be sold." Then it came to a by-election. On the eve of the by-election, Mr Eves said, "Maybe that's right. Maybe it should be off the table for the time being." You know what "the time being" was? Until after the by-election.

People understand these things. They didn't just fall off a turnip wagon. They understand, now that it is apparently back on the table, that it was a merely an election ploy, and what a sad one, when you have to go to those lengths to assure yourself of a win in a by-election.

It was said earlier this evening, and I agree with it, that no matter how the debt was accumulated, no matter what the debt is, no matter whether it's stranded debt, residual debt—you name it—the people out there realize it's debt. It's about \$38 billion. No matter where you plunk that debt, it's going to have to be paid back, either through taxes or rates. It's the rates that the people in my area are concerned about. My colleague just gave an example of how rates have escalated on the 407 after it was privatized. In fact, I recall that there was a promise that rates wouldn't increase. Let me tell you, if the same promise is being made about Hydro One, that rates won't increase, I'm not so sure that the people of the province of Ontario would believe it.

At the Speaker's behest, I think he's signalled that 9:30 of the clock is here.

The Acting Speaker: It being 9:30, this House stands adjourned until 10 am tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2129.

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premiers et derniers numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

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of Debates
(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 6 June 2002

Jeudi 6 juin 2002



**Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Greffier
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Thursday 6 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 6 juin 2002

The House met at 1000.

Prayers.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002

SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'EMPLOI
DES POMPIERS VOLONTAIRES

Mr Arnott moved second reading of the following bill: Bill 30, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 in order to protect the employment of volunteer firefighters / Projet de loi 30, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie afin de protéger l'emploi des pompiers volontaires.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member has 10 minutes to make his presentation.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I am honoured to begin second reading debate of my private member's bill, Bill 30, Volunteer Firefighters Employment Protection Act.

In much of my riding of Waterloo-Wellington and in many communities across Ontario, citizens rely on volunteer firefighters for emergency response and protection. Be it fires at our homes, farms or businesses, or accidents on our highways, they are often the first on the scene, taking command of the effort of protecting the public and of saving lives.

Their work is about as essential as it gets, and knowing that their work is volunteered and provided in the spirit of giving back to their communities, their contributions have a very special value which is assigned to them by their neighbours and fellow citizens who support them. My bill is intended to protect and support their work and uphold the regard given to our volunteers in Ontario by protecting the right of paid, full-time firefighters to volunteer as firefighters in their home communities.

The fact is, volunteer fire departments in Ontario rely to a great extent on the services offered by paid, full-time firefighters who choose to volunteer where they live. By volunteering, these full-time firefighters, or so-called double-hatters, provide highly valued expertise, skills

and training for fellow volunteers. The double-hatters have the opportunity to share their skills, give back to their communities and be leaders in their communities.

Double-hatters are key contributors to our volunteer fire departments, and it has been brought to my attention that they are facing pressure tactics from their union in some communities. These tactics are aggressive, heavy-handed and aimed at putting an end to the volunteer service provided by these individuals. Bill 30 would protect double-hatters from such tactics by amending the Fire Protection and Prevention Act to ensure that firefighters cannot be disciplined, expelled, lose representation or lose their full-time jobs solely on the basis of their volunteer service. Based on what has been brought to my attention, I can say to my colleagues in this House that the need for this legislation is as clear as the need we have in every community to have the right to volunteer on our own free time.

The need for a law clarifying and upholding the right to volunteer was first brought to my attention by Doug Smith, chief of the Puslinch fire department. I've known Doug for years, and he came to see me in my constituency office on March 18. He was very concerned that the Puslinch fire department would be weakened if the union forced their double-hatters to quit. Members here will also appreciate and understand the fact that the Puslinch fire department is one of the busiest volunteer brigades in the province, because Highway 401 runs through their township, and almost one third of their firefighters are double-hatters.

Chief Doug Smith became a member of a committee of the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario to support and promote legislation that would protect the right to volunteer. We are debating such legislation today, and I want to commend Doug for his leadership and thank him for joining us here in the members' gallery, along with his volunteer firefighter colleagues Dave Thompson, Adam Gall, Jim Richards, Clare Weber from St Jacobs, Bill Burns and Bob Burns. Thank you, all of you, for making this trip to Toronto to support Bill 30 and for all you do to keep our communities safe.

I also heard from township of Woolwich mayor Bill Strauss, who raised this issue with me on March 28 and gave me a municipal alert bulletin from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario or, as we know it, AMO. We were advised by AMO that the International Association of Fire Fighters is exerting pressure on full-time firefighters to stop them from volunteering in their home communities. They indicated that firefighters are being charged and threatened with being charged, and that

expulsion from their union could result in the loss of their jobs. AMO also made it clear that municipalities and their taxpayers cannot afford the cost of losing the service of double-hatters. Recognizing the problem for volunteer fire departments, the council of the township of Guelph-Eramosa passed a resolution stating their concerns and forwarded AMO's alert to me.

When the Legislature resumed sitting in May, I spoke with members of our government caucus about the problem and found that several others shared my concerns. For example, there's a problem in Whitchurch-Stouffville, which will be further addressed by my colleague the MPP for Oak Ridges in his presentation. I also appreciated having the opportunity on a number of occasions to discuss my bill with the Minister of Public Safety and Security, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Deputy Premier.

Based on what has been discussed in Waterloo-Wellington and here at Queen's Park, it is clear to me that this bill is needed sooner rather than later, and I'm glad we're able to debate it today. I want to thank the member for Ottawa-Vanier for making her private member's time available to me by trading our scheduled allotments of time.

To help demonstrate the need for this bill, I was advised in a letter from Chief Doug Smith that nine of his volunteers in Puslinch are double-hatters. He states the issue clearly: "The obvious threat to safety is the withdrawal of the double-hatters from the volunteer service." I say it ought to be clear to all members that losing experienced personnel also means losing the standard of public safety that has been built up over years of hard work and teamwork. Chief Smith also adds that it takes four to five years of experience to become fully competent in delivering worthwhile fire prevention programs.

I also received letters of support for Bill 30 from a number of fire chiefs, including Brent Barnes of the Arthur area fire department, John McDougall of the town of Erin, Clare Weber from St Jacobs, John Ritz of the township of Wilmot, Ron Taves of Baden, Dan Hitchcock of Guelph-Eramosa, Dennis Kaufman of Clifford and Kevin Karley of Maryhill. I've also received letters of support from the councils of the townships of Wellesley and Centre Wellington and from the town of Caledon and the city of Kawartha Lakes.

Since I introduced Bill 30 in the Legislature on May 22, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has endorsed my bill and has written to every MPP in the House asking them to support the bill, and also sent an alert to municipalities in support of Bill 30. Jim Richards, president of the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario, sent a memo to all MPPs asking them to support this bill, stating that countless double-hatters have already resigned in fear of losing their jobs due to this union action.

I've also been contacted by Tim Lee, who lives in the city of Kawartha Lakes and who is a full-time firefighter in Whitby. Tim has been charged by his union for volunteering in Little Britain, where he lives and has

chosen to raise his family. He indicated to me that his local has moved quickly to put him before a trial board and further described the union tactics in the following manner: "No firefighter deserves to go through the harassment, mistreatment, embarrassment and stress that I have been enduring since December 14, 2001, when my local started its campaign of intimidation, threats and mistreatment against me for the 'crime' of serving the community I grew up in and love."

1010

Not everyone supports the principle of enabling full-time firefighters to volunteer. The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association has expressed its concerns about this bill. While I had no intention of withdrawing it, I met with their president, Henry Watson, and vice-president, Fred LeBlanc, on May 30 to hear their concerns and discuss my reasons for introducing this legislation. They mentioned that members who volunteer could become exhausted, and that would impact on their performance. To this I say that the kind of person who volunteers will always find a way to contribute in their home community in their own free time and they should be trusted to govern themselves and uphold their commitments.

They also mentioned to me concerns about greater health risks due to increased exposure to harmful agents. There may be some validity to this point, and I suggest that it should be thoroughly studied by the office of the fire marshal. Finally, they say that municipalities face risks by relying too heavily on divided loyalties. But I say that municipalities and individuals who serve their communities can best decide how their expertise and skills should be utilized.

As I close my introductory remarks on this debate, I ask all members to consider the issue as it really is. If you support the right to volunteer and to protect fire departments from heavy-handed tactics, I hope you will support Bill 30. If you want to uphold standards of public safety, then support our volunteer fire departments, which have said that removing double-hatters will weaken their forces. Volunteer fire departments across Ontario have made our safety standards strong over the years, and by supporting Bill 30 today you will support dynamic teams of firefighters who are working to make our public safety standards even stronger for tomorrow. I would appreciate the support of all members for Bill 30.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I'm saddened and honoured and privileged to speak to the bill. I want to start by making a very definitive statement about the position of each of the members in this House. I would say, with respect, that we are talking about the firefighting profession across the board and that we unequivocally support our professional firefighters, our volunteer firefighters and anyone who works in education, prevention and suppression of fire in our communities. I want to make it very clear from the onset that this should not and cannot be a discussion of the value of firefighters across Ontario. The debate should be about this particular bill in its present form.

The form this bill takes starts on two premises. The first is that it's the total responsibility of municipalities to support firefighting in the province of Ontario. That's a fallacy; that's a mistake. Quite frankly, the monies that are obtained by the municipalities are not solely the responsibility of this government. Our party on this side, and Dalton McGuinty, offered an immediate solution to part of this problem by providing the Ontario security fund option that was available to this government, which would have made \$100 million available to the people of Ontario for safety, and \$50 million of that would have been money spent directly on municipalities to provide for the issues that are being brought up by the member opposite in terms of his offer.

I want to make sure that everyone understands that when this offer was made, it was totally rejected by the government side, saying that it cost too much. The reality of the day was that it was money already available to the government to reprioritize its spending. At the time, the government offered a bill that said they would spend approximately \$25 million. As I said in my first response to Bill 148, I think the expenditure of \$25 million was laudable but it was not enough. In this case, it would have provided \$50 million that was going to be available to our communities to improve firefighting across the province.

The member opposite also said that they said, "We have safety and standards issues with this double-hatter issue." Quite frankly, let's take a step back and say to the member opposite that the municipalities are short-changed. Why would they not want to support this bill simply because the government has not provided enough funds for them to have those standards set in the first place? The municipalities are saying to us, "We don't have the money. We just don't have the money."

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Member from London-Fanshawe, come to order.

Mr Levac: The members on the opposite side are quite prepared to heckle, because we're talking about the real issue: the underfunding of our municipal fire departments across Ontario. We've now turned this into an urban versus rural issue, and the fact that we've done that is deplorable.

I also want to make a couple of points about the professional firefighters. The member introduced the bill on May 22, and he met with them on May 30. I was told that the meeting was respectful and both sides tried to make points. The member was putting the bill before that, and he knew it. How soon did he meet with all of the other organizations in this case? There are threats on both sides of, "Your side is wrong." We're not getting the right answers here because AMO sent out a memo that basically said there are over 2,000 double-hatters. The fire marshal himself said it's between 600 and 1,000. I continued to ask the question, and when pressed, he said, "Well, it's on the low side of the 600 to 1,000. It's probably somewhere between 600 and 700 double-hatters."

The reality of the day is another point that needs to be made, and that is one of justice. The reality we're talking about here is making sure those municipalities receive the training that they say is not there because the double-hatters have to go to those municipalities and provide that training. Why would the government not then make sure that all those municipalities have accessible the training that's necessary in order to allow us to do that? It's not happening. It's an abdication of responsibility.

A second question: why would the government not step forward and say, "This is a priority for us and this is something we should be doing"? The private member's bill is addressing a small need in four communities across the province. There's an inconsistency across the argument. The inconsistency arises when we start looking at some municipalities without being able to solve this problem in negotiation. The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters are now in concert with the minister's office that's responsible for fire safety, public safety and security. They're talking with the fire chiefs' association. They're talking with AMO. They're in the middle of these negotiations to try to resolve concerns within their constitution.

That brings up the second point about somebody reaching into the constitution of an organized group. Is this going to start happening now? Where does it stop? Where does it start?

We see what happened with Bill 160 where we were told that this funding formula doesn't work and now we're going to be heroes and correct it when they were told all along it's not the way to proceed; Bill 58, Hydro. You can name examples where the government has proceeded with government bills and it always has to come back and correct them: city financing and taxation, seven different bills at one time, one right after the other to correct the mistakes they were making when they were getting advice from the stakeholders on how to solve the problem. Now in the middle of these negotiations that are taking place between the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters and all stakeholders we have legislation that comes in and says, "This is how it's going to be done." That's not good negotiation.

If you think this bill is going to solve the problem that's being alluded to in a dramatic way—there's intimidation going on and there are things going on between the two associations—it's not going to happen.

Mr Arnott: You're saying there is no intimidation?

Mr Levac: What did I say? Pay attention, Ted.

Mr Arnott: I'm listening intently.

Mr Levac: If you think this bill is going to solve the problem you're alluding to, you're dead wrong. You're sending it underground, and that's a problem.

Mr Arnott: Are you in support of intimidation?

Mr Levac: Quite frankly, what you're talking about is doing the same type of intimidation to a group. You're putting a bill out there that says, "This is how you're going to write your constitution." That, to me, represents how the government escapes all the time. It's always

download, cut and burden the municipalities with those responsibilities. How else are they supposed to respond?

Interjections.

Mr Levac: If you were providing in the first place that activity that was necessary for them, in order for them to receive the funding for the training that's necessary, the reliance on that particular issue would not take place. The government is not funding those communities appropriately, particularly the small communities that have been saying to you for many years, including all governments, that there's a double standard. There's enough money being raised by some municipalities that they're providing those services.

The fire marshal is making recommendations that are all over the map. In one breath they're saying, "You know what? This might solve the problem," but then again if you look at the four other options that are available, there are pros and cons for each one of them. At the end of the day, the fire marshal made it quite clear—and if I have to read it, I will—that unless every single two-hatter was removed instantly, there would not be safety and health issues. It's not there.

There are questions that need to be answered. What about WSIB? Who's going to be responsible for anyone who gets hurt and, tragically and unfortunately if it does happen, God forbid, there's a death? Who's going to be responsible? The municipality that has the professional firefighter on it? The local municipality that has the volunteer?

1020

In terms of the volunteers we also speak of the average salary, the average wage, a wide-ranging issue. There are some who say, "You know what? We should be volunteering for no cost at all." Others are saying they're paying up to \$30 an hour. The professional training that one is talking about should be coming from a standard that's established by the province of Ontario—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Oxford, come to order.

Mr Levac: The province of Ontario is abdicating its responsibility to ensure—we now have a private members' bill that's going to step right in the middle of this. Quite frankly, I'm disappointed. I'm also disappointed—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: I'm not warning the member for Oxford again.

Mr Levac: I'm also concerned, definitely concerned, about anyone using intimidation tactics on any individual in this province. I don't accept the reality that this is the solution, because you're simply sending it underground. You're not providing for the government's responsibility. You're not providing for the things that I said at the very beginning.

What's happening here? Now the government is able to step away from the fact that it has created a crisis between urban and rural communities. It has not funded the small rural, small urban communities. They need that. The Ontario security fund that was proposed by my

leader, Dalton McGuinty, provided an opportunity to have \$50 million provided to those communities, at their call, for the very reason we're talking about today. We indicated quite clearly in the preamble that that money was for safety, for security, for improvement of the fire department and the police department in those communities. It was rejected by this government. Why? Because we're talking about cost containment. We're not talking about safety and security; we're talking about cost containment.

Quite frankly, I can't support a bill that sticks its hand in the middle of somebody's constitution, and in the middle of the negotiations that are taking place that are slowly and methodically solving that issue. I challenge each of the organizations, each and every one, to do so in the best interest of the public at large.

The last comment I would make to you is that if this bill gets to committee, I'm going to be offering amendments that I'm sure the government will have to consider because they know it's the right thing to do. If they don't accept this amendment, it's because they're abdicating their responsibility to provide those communities with the funds to do that. I'll guarantee you, if you provide those funds, AMO will be on side with this request by the professional firefighters that it receive the total number of funds required. Their argument right now is simply financial.

I do not support this bill.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I want to commend my colleague the member from Waterloo-Wellington for bringing this important piece of legislation forward.

I'm shocked at the member from Brant who suggests that by bringing this debate forward in the House somehow this issue is going to be pushed underground. I believe that is an insult to every stakeholder involved in this, suggesting that a public debate in the Legislature of this province on an important issue would somehow force an issue to be dealt with in a dishonest way, that somehow the stakeholders here would not comply with the direction, the legislation, of this province. I don't believe that for a minute and I really believe the member needs to reconsider his position.

I'm supporting this legislation today, because I believe that at stake is a fundamental principle of rights. I believe that if this legislation is not passed, if somehow we don't deal with this issue, then this Legislature effectively is condoning discrimination against a profession, against full-time firefighters in this province, who do not have the rights any other worker in his province has, to do in their spare time what they choose to do. I believe it's fundamentally wrong. I commend the member for bringing this forward and we have a responsibility to do something about it.

I have a letter here that was sent to a firefighter in Whitchurch-Stouffville by the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association. "With the firefighters in Stouffville currently trying to negotiate their first collective agreement, your involvement as a part-time firefighter will definitely have a negative impact on other full-time

firefighters in that region"—no reference to health and safety issues. This is purely and outrightly an issue of union negotiation. I think it's fundamentally wrong and we cannot endorse it.

I have a letter from the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville: "Urgent action by your government is required. In Stouffville's case, 24 out of 55, or 44%, of our volunteers are double-hatters. Seven have received threatening letters and I expect the other 17 will receive similar correspondence very shortly." That letter from the firefighters' association, and this is to a full-time firefighter in this province, goes on to say, "We are requesting that you comply with the TPFFA constitution ... and stop performing your duties as a part-time firefighter. This will allow the firefighters in Stouffville to negotiate a collective agreement without the negative impact of full-time firefighters masquerading as part-time firefighters." This is not about health and safety. This is about denying a particular group in our province the right to do in their spare time as they choose to do.

We have a problem in Richmond Hill as well. I have a letter I'd like to quote from: "To suggest to the two-hatters' permanent employer"—this is the municipality—"that their employment"—that is the full-time firefighters' employment—"should be terminated or threatened because the two-hatter is not a member in good standing of his or her firefighters' association is an abuse of the association's power. The employees' work record should be the basis of any actions regarding employment tenure, not conformity with arbitrary rules of a union" today.

I will be supporting this legislation, not because I'm not suggesting that there may be issues to be worked out or that there are problems. There may even be some challenges on the funding side. I'm not denying that. But fundamentally here before us in the House today, this legislation deals with giving rights to men and women in our province who are denied those rights as a result of being excluded from a piece of labour legislation. We need to rectify that. This will restore their rights with every other person, every other worker in Ontario. We have a responsibility as a Legislature to do that today.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): It is a pleasure to rise and speak in support of Bill 30, introduced by my colleague from Waterloo-Wellington. I think it's a very appropriate bill to deal with the issue of volunteerism in our communities.

I want to start off, Mr Speaker, by thanking him for introducing the bill, but more so, to you and the members of the Legislature, to point out my personal bias. I have had the opportunity to serve as a volunteer firefighter for 25 years. I want to say that at the conclusion of the 25 years, because I was elected to this place, I no longer could attend to my duties as a volunteer firefighter, so I took my leave. The fire marshal of the province gave me a plaque, and it hangs in my office, right alongside the plaque I got for being a minister of the crown. I can tell you I take as great a pride in looking at that plaque, having served as a volunteer firefighter, as having been a minister of the crown in Ontario.

I think it's a noble profession. At many times in my 25 years in the fire service I was told that when the firefighters go to an emergency, the fire is just as hot for volunteers as it is for full-time firefighters. So I think it tells us that it's very important that we have our volunteers well trained and that we have the best possible community people to volunteer to do this job.

I agree with my colleague from Oak Ridges, who suggests we should not take away a full-time firefighter's right to volunteer. There seems to be some argument that these are being forced into volunteering, that somehow we're taking that expertise and saying, "We want you to take all this expertise you've gained working in the full-time fire department and we are forcing you to take it into the volunteer regime." Nothing could be further from the truth. These are community-minded people who want to help their friends and neighbours in time of need through the volunteer fire service. I think we should do all we can to make that possible so they can provide that service.

1030

As I said, I started with the volunteer fire department in 1971. We set up the new fire department. At the time the department was being organized by a full-time firefighter who had served in the armed forces. He became the fire chief and he served as fire chief for some 20 years. At that time we went to a retirement party, and his comment was that the hardest thing he's ever had to do in the fire service as a volunteer was retiring at age 65 because he wanted to continue serving his community. I think this is the type of opportunity that these full-time firefighters who work in the volunteer sector are providing for us. They're doing it because they want to.

The member opposite was—I think they call it in political terms fearmongering, that somehow this is going to be a great problem with workers' compensation. In the volunteer department, as in the full-time department, the WSIB covers, regardless of where you work in the province of Ontario. The municipality buys the coverage for their volunteers at a set rate. My municipality where I was a volunteer purchased the highest rate possible of any worker to get workers' compensation. So it makes absolutely no difference to the individual where they are working. If they are injured in the service of their community, they will be covered by WSIB. So I don't see that as a great reason.

The other thing that was brought to our attention was that there's a problem in that you may be volunteering for 12 hours fighting a fire and then be asked to go to work. I understand the problem but I would just suggest to you that many firefighters, for whatever reason, because of how they have to be on call seven days a week, have times when they are not working and they'd like to do other jobs. It makes absolutely no difference to me whether they're working 12 hours driving the tractor ploughing the field or whether they're fighting a fire, if they're called in on their full-time job, they will be tired if they were working the previous 12 hours. So I don't believe that's a legitimate reason not to support this bill.

I would submit to the House that the right of these individuals to volunteer should not be taken away and communities should not be deprived of their expertise to help them in time of need.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak in support of this bill. I would urge everyone in this House, including those who have spoken against it, to support this bill for the betterment of our rural communities.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I wish I could say that I'm pleased to be standing to debate this particular bill, but to tell you the truth I'm not pleased to have to be dealing with this issue in this way in this House. Frankly, I wish it hadn't come to this. It's sad really that things have been allowed to degenerate the way they have.

I suppose it's perhaps helpful to say no one's guilty but all of us are responsible. This issue's been kicking around for a long time. I can recall some conversations back in October, making some suggestions about how to get this thing resolved. Clearly, the issue hasn't been resolved and it has caused a great deal of difficulty.

We talk a lot about rights; we talk a fair bit about choices that from time to time need to be made. I want to say to members of the House that this is a very difficult issue for me, having grown up in a blue-collar labour family with an inclination to have a knee-jerk reaction often simply in favour of my union brothers and sisters. But there's a broader set of rights involved here that I think need to be spoken to.

It is difficult for me, as a small-town mayor who relied on a volunteer department and the expertise of two-hatters in my community, to conceive of someone with expertise, who's acknowledged as having expertise, who's my neighbour living beside me and, if my house catches fire and another volunteer is quite competent but maybe doesn't have the same skill set as the two-hatter who's willing to volunteer in my community, having to say to me, "I'm sorry your house is on fire, Ted. I can't help. I've got a union problem with this." It just doesn't strike me as being right.

It also doesn't strike me as being right that in any municipality across this great province and country of ours—by the way, I think Ontario is the only province that doesn't provide protection for two-hatters; perhaps the Northwest Territories as well—we would say, "You don't have the right to use your skill set in defence of life and property."

In addition, there's a community set of rights here, and old history and heritage. This isn't about setting up something new. It's about protecting something that has been in place for decades and centuries; that really, in large part, has represented the spirit of communities.

It also talks to municipal rights. We know that AMO is on side with trying to protect the two-hatter situation and others.

I was to have five minutes. I now have 19 seconds. I would just say that the fire marshal's report made reference to a number of options, none of which was the status quo.

Interjection.

Mr McMeekin: Just give me a second. I'm on your side on this one, OK?

If it's helpful, I'd like to read: "Unlike municipal solutions which may vary depending on the option selected by each municipality, the legislative solution would provide an expedient and uniform solution to the two-hatter issue."

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On behalf of New Democrats here at Queen's Park, I have carefully read this proposed bill—indeed, a bill that received first reading and is here today on debate for second reading. Mr Arnott has been very generous and co-operative in providing all of the material that he has acquired supporting this bill.

It includes a letter of commendation from AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Quite frankly, that raises red flags right away for New Democrats.

Interjections.

Mr Kormos: Well, the track record of AMO when it comes to working women and men has not been particularly strong.

As well, I have consulted extensively on my own. I appreciate the participation that I've had in the formulation of our position during the course of those consultations.

Bill 84 changed the face of firefighting dramatically in this province. Firefighters fought Bill 84. New Democrats fought it, as did members of the Liberal caucus. I recall committee hearings across this province. I recall the incredibly effective campaign by firefighters in opposition to Bill 84. As a result of that, firefighters were able to obtain some modest concessions.

This double-hatting scenario is one that has certainly accelerated in terms of the frequency of confronting it and the difficulties it has posed since Bill 84. Nobody in this Legislature, in any way, shape or form, would ever, in my view—I haven't seen it in the 14 years I've been here, and I don't expect to see it in however many more years the folks of Niagara Centre intend to have me represent them—disparage any firefighter in this province, be that firefighter a full-time employee or be that firefighter a volunteer.

The reality is that the nature of volunteer firefighting has changed substantially. Municipalities are contracting—those hybrid municipalities which have full-time firefighting forces and volunteer forces as well.

1040

Today, just before I got here, I saw the letter from the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada to Steve Pandur of a Welland volunteer fire company, nominating that fire company for the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada Ontario Award for Firefighting Department of the Year, at which point it will then be in the national competition—well deserved and, obviously, in that case, because of the participation that volunteers and full-time firefighters have had in raising funds, notwithstanding this government's squeegee bill. You should note that the squeegee bill shut them down

last September in Welland when one local crank called the police and the police were obliged to tell firefighters to get off the street, to put those boots back on and stop collecting money for the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada.

Volunteer fire companies have been organizing into unions and I support that. I support the right of volunteer firefighters to belong to unions, be it the IWA or the Teamsters, or the union of their choice if it's not the IWA or Teamsters. They've become involved in collective bargaining processes. I support the right of people to join unions and I put to you that unions are democratic institutions wherein the membership of those unions elect their leadership and draft and compose their constitutions and their bylaws.

I say it is not for this Legislature to tell the members of a union or a professional association, as from time to time it might be wont to call itself, how to construct their constitution. It is for their membership to determine how those constitutions are to read.

Just as I respect the constitutions of the IWA or of the Teamsters, I respect the right of the professional firefighters' association of this province to draft their constitution and to set standards and bylaws for their membership, knowing full well that if that membership wants to change that constitution, then that membership should and can. It's not for me to tell workers in unions how to draft their bylaws, their standards and their constitutions.

Having said that, the issue of double-hatting has been of concern in a number of communities across this province. There has been some hyperbole attached to the nature of conflict. I'm advised that in Hamilton there was an agreement negotiated around the issue of double-hatting. I'm advised that in Ottawa there was an agreement reached with the Ottawa Transition Board. I'm also advised that the fire marshal has initiated a process of consultation where conflicts of interest around this issue—and I'm not disputing that there are conflicts of interest. There may well be. In fact, as you would be wont to say, Speaker, there is some evidence that would give rise to what might be considered some *prima facie* conflicts of interest. I understand that.

The fire marshal has initiated a process whereby there can be negotiation around those conflicts. Is the prohibition, if there is one, against full-time firefighters then functioning, in addition to their full-time jobs, in volunteer firefighting companies? Does it create for that individual full-time firefighter who has a legitimate, genuine interest in serving his or her home community, a piece of small-town Ontario separate and apart from the larger municipality in which they work full-time, does it constitute an impediment to that full-time firefighter serving his or her small-town community by virtue of participation in the volunteer fire services?

It's clear that's one of the many inferences that could be drawn. But having said that, the vast majority of volunteer firefighters in this province are not full-time firefighters. I don't in any way, and it would be naive for

anybody in this chamber to dispute the motivation of volunteer firefighters. I not only can take not quarrel with the proposition that volunteer firefighters are motivated by an interest to serve their communities, but I expound that position as enthusiastically and forcefully as one could.

My goodness, volunteer firefighters like the ones I know down in Niagara are not just there serving their communities and their volunteer companies in fire suppression and fire safety, but they're out there participating as first-line response teams to traffic accidents, boating accidents and medical crises—there are no two ways about it. They're also out there along with a whole lot of other folks raising money for muscular dystrophy, notwithstanding the stupid squeegee bill. They've done their best, notwithstanding being told from time to time, as a result of this government, to get off the streets and stop collecting money for MD. They're out there in other fundraising activities, and they're as strong a group of supportive community members as you could ever find.

The fundamental issue here is whether you believe in a trade union's right to write its own constitution. One of the hallmarks of a free and democratic society is the right of trade unions not only to exist but to exist without government interference.

Mr Klees: What about the Charter of Rights?

Mr Kormos: I put to this member—

Mr Klees: What about giving people rights?

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Kormos: —that we should have some great concern—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I'll not warn the members for Oak Ridges or Oxford again.

Mr Kormos: —about a legislative agenda that so boldly would interfere with a trade union's right to write its own constitution.

At the end of the day, I don't believe this bill would serve anybody's interests, and let me explain why: I believe a negotiated resolution of what I acknowledge as a conflict of interests is the one that can best serve the interests of all involved. It's trite to point out that if you put people into an all-or-nothing situation, there are winners but at the same time there are losers.

I want to advocate for a far more progressive style of resolving this conflict. I don't always find myself in tune, onside or in harmony with the fire marshal; he understands that. But in this instance I think the process initiated by the fire marshal is preferable: a process of negotiation; a process of trying to find solutions that best serve the interests of volunteers and of full-time fire fighters; not this legislation but a process of negotiation, a process of value creation, if I may.

New Democrats can't support this legislation, and we won't. We will, however, continue to support volunteer firefighters. We will continue to call upon municipalities across this province to adopt minimum staffing standards, and we will continue to call upon any government, be it this government or its successor, to ensure that

municipalities have the funding and the resources they need to set and maintain those full and minimum staffing standards.

In what I call hybrid communities, like where I come from, the volunteer services have historically—and their histories are long—played an integral role in fire services. They continue to play that role. The dynamics of their relationship with the municipality have changed. Again, there are probably three groups of communities in this province: there are communities that are primarily, if not fully, volunteer; there are communities that are hybrid, like most of the communities I represent; and there are communities like London which are 100% full-time firefighters. So this is a scenario where one size doesn't fit all.

1050

The solution is in readdressing Bill 84. The solution is in returning to some of the arguments made by firefighters against Bill 84. The solution is ensuring that all municipalities, big and small, have adequate firefighting services with appropriate levels of staffing, appropriate levels of resources. In other words, give the firefighters the tools and the training they need because firefighters certainly want to do the training and are prepared to and will undertake it if given the opportunity, and, by God, they need the tools.

The solution is not to participate in the high-risk game of trying to play off one group of firefighters against another. New Democrats stand with the right of union members, be they IWA members, be they Teamsters members, be they members of the professional firefighters' association, to write their own constitutions, to determine bylaws, to determine standards for their membership. We stand with the Liberals in their opposition to this bill, and we call upon the author of this bill to understand that there are solutions, but they are not to be found in this legislative agenda.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I'm very pleased to speak in support of Bill 30, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, in order to protect the employment of volunteer firefighters. I congratulate my colleague Mr Ted Arnott, the member for Waterloo-Wellington, for bringing this bill before the House.

It is indeed an honour to speak up for the true heroes in our communities. Volunteer fire service is the ultimate example of effort and dedication. Volunteer firefighters answer the call every day and put their lives on hold while putting their life on the line. Some make the ultimate sacrifice.

There are more than 120,000 volunteer firefighters in Canada, a number that makes up 80% of the firefighters across this country. I had the pleasure of attending the Dorset-Algonquin Highlands firefighters' pig roast two Saturdays ago. The pig roast was fantastic, but I also had the honour of presenting the chief, Clint MacKay, with a 35-year plaque for his dedication to volunteering in the community. Such committed volunteerism has a long-standing tradition in our province. Volunteer firefighters

are part of the more than 2.3 million unsung heroes of all ages who volunteer in many different ways. Volunteers help keep our communities vibrant and healthy and make our province a much richer place to live.

The volunteer fire service is a proud community tradition that now finds itself under attack. The Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association is seeking to prevent its members from volunteering in community fire departments.

I quote from the Saturday, March 9, 2002, Lindsay Daily Post: "The city's fire chief is warning the level of public safety could be in jeopardy after two volunteer firefighters resigned due to union pressure, and 19 others may not be far behind."

According to the firefighters' association, people who spend their free time fighting fires and responding to all manner of emergencies might not perform well in their jobs when they return to work. They call their members who serve as volunteer firefighters "double-hatters." Well, all volunteer firefighters are double-hatters. They all have other jobs, they all have other ways to earn a living, because they certainly couldn't live on the money they receive from their local fire departments. In my community, if a volunteer firefighter responds to every call, he or she could earn up to \$2,800 a year.

The training standards and regulations placed on today's volunteer firefighters have resulted in a six- to eight-month training period before the average volunteer can be put on a fire truck. Professional firefighters who volunteer in their local communities are ready to go, right away, and the expertise that professional firefighters bring with them is invaluable. Sharing it with volunteer firefighters is a huge benefit.

The Ontario Fire College is located in my beautiful riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. A former principal of the college, Mr Eric Rainey, has provided many, many years of volunteer service for the Bracebridge fire department. His outstanding leadership is a fine example to professional firefighters everywhere around our province.

Our community fire departments need volunteers from many walks of life. Volunteers bring useful skills with them, no matter what their occupation. Expertise in dealing with municipal water systems, construction, mechanical or medical matters all contribute valuable knowledge to emergency response. And we need volunteers who are local residents, able to respond in a timely fashion and have detailed knowledge of the area.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that support from employers, large and small, as well as the self-employed, is essential to fire departments around this province. These employers allow their workers to answer the call for help. They do not threaten them with job loss; they support the commitment to their communities. The member from Niagara Centre seems more concerned with trade unions' constitutional rights than individual rights. Without the support of employers, volunteer fire departments simply could not exist.

Threatening professional firefighters with job loss for volunteering to fight fires on their own time, in their own

communities, alongside their own friends and neighbours, is like telling the good Samaritan to pass on by. It is clearly wrong. I call on members from both sides of this House to support the speedy and unhindered passage of Bill 30.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I'll speak in support of this legislation. We have a lot of great volunteer firefighters in Nepean-Carleton and the former townships of Osgoode, Rideau and Goulbourn and in the constituency of my colleague from Lanark-Carleton and West Carleton. They provide an excellent service to the people in my community. Many wear two or even three hats. That's why I'm very pleased to support this important piece of legislation brought forward by my good colleague from Waterloo-Wellington.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Waterloo-Wellington has two minutes to reply.

Mr Arnott: Once again, I want to thank the volunteer firefighters who are with us in the gallery today. Thank you for your presence today and thank you for the good work you do.

In the short time I have remaining, I wish to thank my colleagues who have participated in this debate: the member for Oak Ridges, the member for Oxford, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, the chief government whip, the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot and the member for Niagara Centre. Thank you very much for your presentations this morning.

I would respond to my colleague the member for Brant. First of all, I want to express, I suppose, appreciation for his contribution, although I must say I fundamentally disagree with his conclusion about this bill. I felt that his unfocused remarks added little to this debate, and I was disappointed in that. He tried to bring partisan politics into this issue. I would reject the fact that there needs to be partisan politics in this issue. It's not an urban-versus-rural issue. It doesn't need to be painted that way.

When we suggest there aren't very many double-hatters, we attempt to diminish the scope of the problem. I would submit to you, sir, that if even one double-hatter is intimidated and threatened to resign, his volunteer force is weakened. That is not an acceptable tactic. I will continue to speak against this tactic. It is not my view that this needs to be a fight between volunteer firefighters and professional firefighters. What we're saying with this bill is that this tactic of threats and intimidation is unacceptable. That's the principle of this bill. If you in fact vote against this bill, you're suggesting at best that you're prepared to turn a blind eye to this unacceptable tactic; at worst, you're condoning it. I would ask you to reconsider your position and ask you to support this bill. I would ask all members of this House to support Bill 30.

ELECTRICITY CONTRACTS

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario government must conduct an immediate review of the

conduct of electricity retailers in the province; put an immediate stop to the practice of soliciting electricity contracts door-to-door or via the telephone; introduce a standard contract used by all electricity retailers, forcing retailers to provide "apples to apples" price comparisons to protect consumers; and immediately begin a non-partisan public education campaign explaining what consumers should look for, and look out for, when signing electricity contracts.

1100

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to standing order 96, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin has 10 minutes to make a presentation.

Mr Brown: This resolution today is but a very simple one. It asks the Eves government to act on behalf of the people of Ontario. It asks the Eves government to act now. It asks the Eves government to act decisively. It asks the Eves government to ban the practice of selling retail electricity contracts door-to-door or over the phone. It asks that contracts be clearly comparable in form and it asks that people be allowed to make informed choices, free from pressure, misinformation or just plain confusion.

I think that is what the people of Ontario want. I do not think that is what they're getting. Consumers are particularly vulnerable to acts by certain individuals and/or companies that cannot be effectively monitored by the government or by the regulator, the Ontario Energy Board. The Ontario Energy Board cannot possibly know what is being said at the doorstep. It obviously cannot hear the pitch that is being made at kitchen tables across this province. It cannot know the validity of the information being provided. It cannot know what slick spin is coming to consumers. The regulator plainly cannot know what each individual salesperson might be saying to my aunt, my mother, my brother, my children. It is not possible to know, and these salespeople appear totally unsolicited. They appear at your doorstep to solve a problem you didn't know you had.

My leader, Liberal Dalton McGuinty, placed a bill before the Legislature last February to allow for the cancellation of contracts signed under questionable circumstances. But I seek to go further. We have a huge market of consumers. Millions of Ontario consumers have not yet entered contracts. We must act to protect this market from questionable practices.

My office in Heyden and my office in Elliot Lake have had a large number of calls complaining of the practices of salespeople. Many of these practices, while questionable, may not be illegal, but they have certainly misrepresented the situation in this new market: the prices and the terms of the contract. The ability of Ontarians to make a logical, informed choice on the doorstep is obviously questionable and the regulator cannot possibly be able to monitor what private conversations take place there—unsolicited conversations, I might add.

Let's step back for a minute and understand here what is really being sold. I would suggest that what is really being sold door to door, unsolicited, is not energy or

electricity. I would suggest that it is in reality insurance. It is not the energy of the wind being harnessed and being sold. It is not gravity in the form of falling water being transformed into energy that's being sold. It is not combustion through the use of fossil fuels or biomass that's being sold. It is not the immense energy released from the splitting of atoms that's being sold. It's not the energy that's being supplied through the sun by way of solar panels etc. What is being sold here is not the generation of electricity; it is the generation of electricity coupled with an insurance component that seeks to guarantee a price. In essence, what is being sold is insurance. We have opened a vast new insurance market. I believe that a competitive market is a good thing, but I think consumers need to understand what's really being sold here.

The opening of the retail market on May 1 has opened a market unimaginable just a short while ago. I think every member of this Legislature would know it has caused a great deal of public concern over whether in fact they needed to sign a retail contract. Mr Speaker, you would know of course that they do not; you would know that consumers are free to just move with the market price. They do not need to buy the insurance provided through a contract. But if they believe electricity prices in this province may increase radically, many consumers would believe that the insurance provided through a contract is a good thing to purchase.

For example, we could have the Ontario Energy Board post on a Web site a chart showing comparable terms and prices. I believe that the Ontario Energy Board, upon being asked by a consumer, could provide that chart by way of the mail. I believe electricity retailers should advertise through all the various places in the media, whether that be television, radio, newspapers or flyers. They can use direct mail. I think there are all sorts of opportunities. I would suggest they can even open little shops in malls. They can do whatever they want. But I think in this particular market that having someone appear on your doorstep, in some cases, we have been told, actually cutting up a person's hydro bill in front of them, is a practice that we have no way of monitoring and no way of knowing what the pressure might be.

In my capacity as the critic for seniors, I know this particular group has some difficulty in some cases with this, because they clearly have been customers of whichever particular retailer, in most cases a public utility, for many years, and they don't understand what might happen. I also bring to light that it's not just those who are uninformed who may have problems. My friend from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Jean-Marc Lalonde, has had the experience of not having one contract forged; he's actually had two of these contracts forged. My friend from Renfrew recounts a particular incident about his father. He says that because the person who came to him was from Hydro One, he thought by signing with that company he was making a good deal. No one told him that he would be one of nearly 200,000 customers who signed up with Hydro One, only to have that entire book

of business sold away on the eve of the market opening to Union Energy, a wholly owned subsidiary of Epcor of Edmonton, Alberta. That's just another example of how Ontario consumers have been scammed and ripped off.

This is but a book of insurance. The question I'm really asking, when you boil it right down today, is, do you believe that this particular product, retail electricity insurance, should be sold door-to-door, unsolicited, by people we cannot monitor, where there is no way to monitor them, to consumers who, in many cases, have no idea that they might want to buy the product?

I think the government has done a very poor job of informing the public. I think the government has abrogated its responsibility. I think in the name of consumer protection, I think it only makes sense to ban the door-to-door or telephone solicitation of these contracts.

1110

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to join in this debate. Quite frankly, we debated this type of resolution about a week ago. The resolution is absolutely unnecessary and I believe the members opposite should know that. Not only has our government already put mechanisms in place to protect consumers, but we're trying to enhance those protections. We're not getting help from the member for Algoma-Manitoulin and his colleagues. If anything, they're standing in the way of consumer protection with resolutions like the one we're dealing with today.

Electricity customers want this House to fix the shortcomings we've discovered in electricity retailing, not to shut the business down. The sooner the honourable member and his party move to support Bill 58, the sooner Ontario electricity consumers can be assured they will be even better protected from dishonest retailers than they already are.

As the member well knows, Bill 58, if passed by this House, will strengthen the Ontario Energy Board's powers against unfair marketing and retailing practices. It contains strong prohibitions against false advertising. If it is passed, it will enact a new energy consumers' bill of rights that would allow the government to tell retailers what their contracts should look like and what information they should contain. It would enhance cancellation rights by increasing the existing 10-day right to cancel to 30 days. Not only that, a contract would only take effect after the customer reaffirmed it. Customers would also have to reaffirm contract renewals. The negative renewal option would no longer apply.

These are the kinds of protections people in Ontario told Minister Stockwell they wanted to see when he consulted around the province last month. He listened to their concerns. Bill 58 is a response to them, as well as actions already taken by the energy board with respect to dealing with and penalizing retailers' actions previous to Bill 58.

Ending electricity retailing would be a step backward. We've had some growing pains. We've heard about unscrupulous retailers going door-to-door or marketing over the phone. That happens with any product out there.

There are already protections in place through the Consumer Protection Act and the Criminal Code if we're dealing with fraud or misrepresentation. We're here to fix the problems that are out there. It doesn't mean we should prevent electricity customers from enjoying the benefits that come with electricity retailing, things like the peace of mind that comes from locking in an energy price and knowing what it's going to be for the length of the contract, or the ability to contribute to environmental protection by choosing green energy.

Close to a million Ontario electricity customers have chosen from among retailer offerings. They've decided to let retailers assume the risks of electricity price fluctuations. Retailers have been selling natural gas door to door in Ontario since 1990 and hundreds of thousands of customers have benefited. Why would anyone want to take that opportunity out of the electricity sector?

I'm somewhat surprised this resolution is coming from a Liberal. I might expect it from a New Democrat. They're opposed to choice and open markets. The Liberals, on the other hand, have always claimed to support the notion of competition in order to bring private sector discipline to the electricity sector and put an end to spiralling debt.

Instead of trying to turn back the clock, instead of returning us to the days of the monopoly and of 94% increases, the members opposite should be helping the government and customers by supporting choice. They should be promoting competition to fix the problems of the past and to safeguard our electricity future.

Our government is promoting competition by providing a strong regulatory framework and by educating customers so they can exercise choice. We've conducted an extensive consumer education program aimed at developing a broader awareness of electricity restructuring and informing consumers about the options available to them. Information and educational materials have been provided through brochures, fact sheets, utility bill inserts, a toll-free information line, the ministry Web site and radio, print and television advertising.

In my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, I haven't heard anything of what the member is speaking about, through Barrie Hydro, which is a reputable operator, and the same with Innisfil Hydro.

We on this side believe that informed consumers are empowered consumers. We will continue to see they have all the information they need to exercise their right to choose. Education and regulation is how you strengthen consumer protection. You don't do it by shutting down a retail market and taking away choice.

Before I wrap up, I want to take a minute to remind members why the government has opened the electricity market. We did it because the old Ontario Hydro monopoly was no longer working. It was suffering from mismanagement and waste, and by 1999 it had accumulated debt and other liabilities of \$38 billion. That's \$10,000 for each one of its customers and more than \$3,000 for every man, woman and child in this province. Something had to be done, and we have done that.

The Liberal resolution today would reverse a well-known former federal Liberal finance minister, Donald Macdonald, who supports the path we're taking and not the path we're looking at now. I don't support the resolution.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I am pleased to stand and speak in support of Mr Brown's resolution. It's a wonderful initiative that talks about protection of the public interest.

I heard the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton talk about choice. The problem is, neither the people selling at the door nor the people receiving know what they're buying. They don't know what the choice is. It's nice to have a choice, but you have to have a premise from which that choice is provided.

I want to speak to the whole notion of soliciting electricity contracts. I have a number of individuals who have come to my office and I have dealt with their particular examples of how electricity is being sold. Remember that the government is in charge of this whole deregulation issue, so they should have put protections in place before, not after. They've included gas retailers—the same thing—in their fixing up. As the member from Barrie suggested, they've got to fix up the problem. They created the problem, and they didn't anticipate and didn't put protections in there for the consumer.

I'll give you some examples. Dave is an 81-year-old senior. Direct Energy pressured him. They said to him, "All we want you to say is yes. You're going to have to sign up with somebody pretty soon or you won't be able to get electricity." These are the things that were told to him.

Dave came to us and said, "I don't know what to do. I didn't want to sign this." We were able to deal with it, but if I gave you the whole story of talking to both the salesperson and the Direct Energy account people, it was a nightmare.

Don didn't even sign a contract. The signature on the contract with his name is not his signature. So we've got fraud here.

Mr Tascona: Somebody call the police.

Ms Di Cocco: Oh, absolutely. It's out there. People are unsuspecting victims because this government puts no protection for the consumers of electricity in this province. You open up the market and everybody helps themselves.

Mr Tascona: What are the police for? Call the police.

Ms Di Cocco: They got Stephanie's daughter, who is mentally challenged, to sign a contract at the door. The mom wasn't there for a few minutes. She came back, and sure enough her daughter had signed a contract.

The same thing with Jacky, 70 years old, who states he became scared at the door. He was actually frightened. Again, the same tactic: "If you don't sign up, you're not going to have any electricity."

Peter, 80 years old—again, it seems they have the same thing. He was frightened of what was happening, because he said his electricity was going to be cut off.

These are some. I have many more, but I don't have the time to list them all. These are actual cases, and the

government has a responsibility to protect their interests. That's why we have to support this resolution. This kind of solicitation at the door has to stop.

1120

When it comes to the public interest, the Harris-Ernie Eves government has shown by its action that it has forgotten what is meant by "the public interest." They've attempted this privatization coup that has failed and is a mess because of a court order. And all the debacle has been created over the last few weeks because we were able to peek under the cloak of secrecy that was thrown over the successor Ontario Hydro companies. That cloak of secrecy was wrapped around the successor Ontario Hydro companies by the Harris-Eves duo because they removed the successor Ontario Hydro companies from public scrutiny.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Very convenient.

Ms Di Cocco: And conveniently so. Is that the public interest? Is the public interest being protected? I don't think so. The public interest is not protected from the soliciting and the selling of electricity, nor was it being protected when the successor companies were divided up.

Over the last few days we've heard all this rhetoric, "Oh, my, we've got to fix this mess; it's such a problem." It couldn't have been stated better—this is from the *Globe and Mail*—and I loved Brian Milner's analogy: "But as Mr Eves and his energy minister, Chris Stockwell, fume in outrage, we are once again reminded (it happens a lot) of Claude Rains in *Casablanca*"—people who are my age understand that—"as he is about to shut down Rick's Café for illicit gambling. 'I'm shocked! Shocked to find that gambling is going on in here,' he declares just as a croupier hands him his winnings." The fact is that the government knew back in 1999 what has been going on with Hydro One and the rest of the successor companies.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I've listened with awe to some of the statements being made here today. I heard about natural gas being sold on the streets since 1990, and in fact there is nothing erroneous about that statement. It has been sold on the streets since 1990. But in spite of that, we saw the problems of selling retail natural gas on the streets, we saw the gas spikes of a few years ago, and tenants, particularly in the city of Toronto and in the major cities of this province, are paying a huge price for that deregulation, for that sale at the door, for the natural gas spikes that have taken place.

This government has done nothing to help them in their time of trouble, and I expect they will do nothing to help the electrical consumer at the same time.

To go just a little bit further on the natural gas spikes and how they're playing out every day at the tenant review tribunal in Toronto, every day there are landlords going before that tribunal and they're saying that they signed contracts for energy, for natural gas in their apartments, which are way and above what one can buy natural gas for, or that they didn't buy a contract. They

can win both ways here, you see. They didn't buy the contract, and they're relying on the spike from a couple of years ago as their energy cost, and they are being rewarded for their incompetence. They're being rewarded by this government with above-guideline increases. Every tenant in almost every apartment building in Toronto where the landlord has done it has been gouged with additional increases for costs that are no longer borne. It's a clear example of what happens when you just allow an unfettered, unregulated market to go out and sell these kinds of things.

I ask any of you to go and ask a tenant with an above-guideline increase how he or she got that. I guarantee you, nine times out of 10 it's for gas costs for an unregulated market, which you have allowed to proceed and which you have no interest whatsoever in protecting them from. Now I see here that you have no interest, again, in protecting consumers who are being gouged by similar types of people at the door.

At least with natural gas, people have a choice. If you choose not to heat your home with natural gas, you can reconvert back to oil, or you can put in electric space heaters or you can put in insulation or you can do a number of things to lower your costs. But how do people have a choice with electricity, other than setting up a generator, which is pretty difficult, in your house, apartment or condominium? Other than going down to the Honda dealership, buying a generator, plugging into that and having the constant noise and fumes of gasoline burning, how else do you get by without electricity? How do you turn on your television and lights? How does your refrigerator work? How do any of the modern conveniences that we all need every day work?

People have a reliance on electricity, which goes so far as to make them absolutely afraid. They are afraid of losing their electrical service and they are afraid, if the costs skyrocket beyond their ability to pay, that they will no longer be able to use their televisions, their computers or any of the other electrical instruments or gadgets in their houses that they rely upon every day, some of them even to the point of health and public safety. Some of them are even machines that keep people alive. They are afraid.

It is with knowing this fear that the energy retailers are going to the door. "Tie in with us now. We can make sure that you keep your electricity. We will squeeze every last cent out of you but we will make sure that you will keep your electricity." The reality is that people are afraid. People don't know what to do. They have never had to negotiate for electricity before. They are simply not informed. People have come to my office by the dozens, asking, "What does it cost for a kilowatt hour? How much do I pay for electricity? How much more is this contract I've just signed? Have I been duped? I didn't know what I was doing." They are coming by the dozens and dozens. Primarily these people who are being duped are older, have less education, are afraid. They are just not with it. They can go to the supermarket and they can compare at the Dominion or at Sobeys the cost of a

head of lettuce. They will know that one is 79 cents and one is 69 cents and at which place they're likely to buy it. They know that they can shop in two stores and look at the commodities which they understand. But they don't understand kilowatts, megawatts or ohms. They have never had to do this before. With the greatest of respect, to simply pounce and deregulate the market without the kind of training whereby people would know to look for something that's going to cost around 3 cents or 4 cents is leaving these guys unfettered. It's like turning wolves on to a pack of sheep. They are just there and they are going to take complete advantage whenever they can.

I have sat here for the last five weeks, I have to tell you, in complete awe of what has happened in this province and what is in this Legislature. In December, when the former Premier got up to leave, he left one parting shot. As if he hadn't done enough to the province already, he left with one parting shot, and that parting shot was this electricity bill about selling Hydro One. I think the people opposite must rue that day. They must have wondered what was happening to them at a time when they hoping for renewal, new leadership and a new direction. What did they get? They got the parting shot from the outgoing Premier, who has saddled you with one of the worst political problems that I have ever in my life witnessed, either inside or outside the House, either in city hall or on the streets. I have never seen the machinations that have gone on here in this Legislature for the last five weeks.

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre): They're doing a good job in Ottawa too.

Mr Prue: I don't know. I'm watching Ottawa too. They're doing a good job, but not as good as you guys in terms of being skewered on your own petard. I want to tell you, I have never seen that.

I don't know whether to thank the past Premier or not. It's all too easy to sit here on the opposition side and chortle at what he has done to you. He did so much to so many people—to nurses, to doctors, to teachers, to welfare mothers, to everyone else—but this is the ultimate coup. He's actually done it to his own people. He's set you on a road for which I think you have no outcome. You have here an enormous problem on all levels of electricity, whether it's the door-to-door sales, OPG or selling Hydro One—just all of it.

1130

The bill we have here today is a review of the retailers. We have all read the newspaper accounts. I would think every single member opposite is just like me and has had people come in, disturbed and upset about the retailers at their door. You must have seen one—

Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre): Not one.

Mr Prue: Not one. There you go. You must be lucky. You must have no old and infirm people. You must have no door-to-door retailers who are ripping them off. Lucky for you. I wish I was that lucky, and I wish my community was that lucky.

You've all seen the newspapers and you've all read about the aggressive tactics. We in the New Democratic

Party had to laugh a little because for a couple of weeks there, as Howard Hampton was going around the province warning about this kind of situation, we even had the retailers—who were very smart. They adopted a door-to-door sales policy showing Howard Hampton saying, "Your prices are going to go up. You need to sign here. You need to trust Howard Hampton. Please sign here on the line because if you don't, your prices are going to go up." They had a bit of a mini sales boom over all of that. I have to tell you that these guys have been to my door many times. They keep coming, company after company, trying to sell the product.

Mr Wetlaufer: If they were using scare tactics, what does that say about Howard?

Mr Prue: It's always the same silly story: "You have to do this to protect yourself."

Interjection.

Mr Prue: At least we have a leader who's here in the House often. I wish we could say the same about your party.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I think he's been here as much as yours.

Mr Prue: I don't think so. Anyway, I still think he's better than your former one. I have to give you that. He's still better than your former one.

Mr Hardeman: Stick with the facts.

Mr Prue: I'm sticking with the facts. They've been at my door and they're always there with the same silly story. They're always trying to prey upon people's fears. I can laugh at them, but I want to tell you that many people do not. Many people have succumbed. There are more than a million people who have succumbed.

The member opposite from Bradford-Simcoe did say that some of this has already been addressed, and that's true. I have to think that the member who is presenting the bill today had written this prior to the government bill. What he is saying about ending the practice, that's OK. What he's saying about the standard contract, that's OK. What he's saying about non-partisan education, I think that's absolutely essential and we can agree with that.

We are going to support his bill, but the bill doesn't go near far enough to the gravity of the situation that is out there. The failure of this particular bill here today is that it does not give redress to the more than one million people who have signed contracts. It does not allow them to get out of those contracts, even though many of them, with the hindsight of time, have discovered that the signing of the contract was not in their best financial interest, even though with the hindsight of time they know it is not going to offer the panacea they thought it was, even though with the hindsight of time they wish they had not or maybe wish they had signed with some other retailer who would have given them a better deal.

There are more than a million people out there who signed these contracts and who are now stuck with them and who now in the next few weeks are going to come out and find their first bill on their doorstep. They are going to see, very sadly, that the costs of their electricity

vis-à-vis what they were paying at this time last year have gone up and have gone up significantly. In spite of the brave words here and in spite of the markets showing that costs have remained fairly steady up until this point because we haven't had any major heat problems this summer, they're going to see that they have in fact paid too much.

There are a million people out there who are crying out. There are a million people out there who wish they would have the opportunity to renegotiate. This bill does not allow for that. They have found out they're paying too much. They have found out they were pressured. They are finding out that maybe this wasn't a good deal after all.

That is a failure of the bill because it does not deal with them. I know it's very difficult to do retroactive bills. It's very difficult to change things that have already been, but from time to time governments do make that decision when they feel something has been done wrongly. They can make amends for legislation which had not foreseen this.

When the member opposite spoke, he said this was to redress some of the things that could not have been seen. Surely this could have been seen. Simply following what was happening with deregulated natural gas would have shown you what would have happened with electricity, and it would happen not just in the same way, but even worse, because electricity is a commodity for which there are no substitutes. The government should have foreseen.

The problem with this bill is that it's failing to call for a review of the system. It is simply saying, "Here we are. We're out there selling the electrical market. We're out there allowing door-to-door salesmen, and we don't disagree that these door-to-door salesmen should be allowed to do it." In our party, we think this is fundamentally wrong. We have said this from the beginning. We do not believe in the privatization either in how hydro is produced or how it is sold or the transmission lines. We believe it is a public commodity.

I served on a Hydro board for some five years myself, and in all the time I served on that board and in all the time I was a local councillor and was connected with Hydro in the community, we never had the kinds of problems we are seeing here today with consumers. We never saw the consumers ripped off. We never had them angry about the prices. We never had them angry about how they were being talked to at the door. We never had them worried about what was going to happen with Hydro One. We never had them worried about OPG. We never had them worried about anything. They were satisfied with the commodity that was being delivered. Now when we're in the competitive market, we have the whole problem of caveat emptor. I'm saying to the people, "When those guys come to your door, notwithstanding this bill, simply tell them no."

Mr Sampson: I'm pleased to stand and say a few words on this particular resolution. It's not a bill; it's a resolution—I draw that to the attention of the member from the NDP caucus.

Mr Prue: A slip of the tongue.

Mr Sampson: That's right.

Actually, I think there are some valid points the member for Algoma-Manitoulin has raised in this resolution, the majority of which, by the way, I believe are captured by Bill 58, which was tabled by—

Interjection.

Mr Sampson: I'm just drawing to your—

Mr Brown: The resolution was first.

Mr Sampson: Sure—which the Minister of Energy has tabled and may or may not be before this House today or this evening. It's actually in the form of a bill which will have attendant regulations, which I think will drive some of the things that you were looking for in your resolution.

I'm also pleased to speak to this very briefly because I think there are very few people in this province who haven't at one time had to answer their door or their phone to somebody who was marketing some product or other. In fact, it happened to me just last week, believe it or not. By the way, much to the annoyance of just about everybody who's listening, it usually happens at the time you're either having dinner or you're about to head out to something or you're about to go and do something you have been planning to do. Sure enough, the phone or the doorbell rings. The doorbell rang at our place. It was our Sunday dinner time. We try to have dinner together as a family. I go to the door, and it's somebody who is marketing long-distance telephone contracts. I said, "Hello." The first comment out of their mouth was, "I need to see your long-distance phone bill." It wasn't, "Hello. How are you doing?" It was, "I need to see your long-distance phone bill." You know what? I'm not too sure I could even produce my long-distance phone bill on that kind of notice. I'm not even too sure where it sits in the house any more. It's under a stack of papers somewhere, no doubt. Hopefully, it's a paid bill as opposed to an unpaid bill.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): Your reputation precedes you.

Mr Sampson: Thank you, Minister. I really appreciate that comment from the Chair of Management Board.

These types of marketing trends, these behaviours, have been going on for some time. To somehow lay this at the feet of electricity reform is unfair, to be mild about that comment. In fact, I dare say the members who are standing and speaking to this resolution who sit in this House on a regular day do a little bit of door-to-door canvassing themselves every once in a while, whether it's at election time during writ period—and some of my colleagues actually do that between writs.

1140

I think what you're trying to get at, I say to the member opposite, is that you're hoping to have some code of behaviour established so that those who don't want to answer the door or want to have time to consider the options that are being given to them at the door are given

that option. I think a code of behaviour, a standard of behaviour, is well in order, not just for electrical marketers but for those who are selling life insurance, long-distance telephone contracts, you name it, door to door; God forbid, maybe even politicians who are selling themselves door to door. Well, maybe not.

But I'm worried that the member's resolution is taking that one step further, which is going to start to erode some of the benefits, I should say, of door-to-door marketing, any marketing.

I will finish by saying that strangely enough this door-to-door salesperson who came to my door trying to sell me a long-distance contract actually got me thinking about my long-distance contract. I started to pay attention to the volumes of ads that are on the airwaves, on the TV and in the papers these days, and I have started to take a very aggressive look at whether or not indeed I'm paying too much for my long-distance bill. A little bit of research proves that indeed I was. So as a result of competition, I may be able to save myself a few pennies, for which, on behalf of the other members of my family, I would say thank you very much, because that allows us to spend that money elsewhere or perhaps not spend it elsewhere and put it in the bank, which is another good thing to be doing with surplus cash these days.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): They're not paying any interest at all.

Mr Sampson: We can talk about the interest, if you will, later. But I say to my friends in the House, yes, I think there's some need for some regulation and some monitoring of anybody who is selling anything door to door, widgets or gigawatts of power. The bill we have before the House on electrical reform does deal with that as it relates to electrical salespersons, in fact probably takes that further step that is available to anybody now to deal with long-distance telephone marketers at their house.

I'm worried, though, that we will start to table resolutions and pass resolutions here in this House that will start to curtail competition, because in the absence of competition we're going to get a monopoly environment in electrical business and a monopoly environment in any retail business that never proves to be beneficial to the taxpayer and the consumer. We have to be careful not to take that further step, and for that reason I'm afraid I'm not going to be able to support the resolution that's standing in the member's name. But I do want to encourage him to join with me and support the bills before the House that actually take a lot of what he has in his resolution and turn it into effective legislation and regulation to deal with those who are around the streets of this province perhaps being a bit too aggressive in plying their trade in the electrical sales business.

I will now sit down and pass the floor to the opposition.

Mr Bradley: I'm going to speak in favour of this resolution. If there's one problem that is really coming to prominence in communities across Ontario, including St Catharines and the Niagara region, it is people who are

trying to scam consumers in this province over the issue of electrical power.

The resolution calls for the Ontario government to conduct an immediate review of the conduct of electricity retailers in this province. I can't think of anybody who would not want to see this resolution passed.

Some time ago Dalton McGuinty advanced a program which I thought was very useful in protecting consumers. It said the following: that they should direct the OEB, the Ontario Energy Board, to aggressively investigate complaints about unfair electricity contracts and cancel contracts signed as a result of unfair sales pitches, find and suspend the licences of electricity retailers using unfair practices, place a moratorium on all further electricity retailing until consumers are given an accurate representation of what they now pay for electricity so they can make clear, apples-to-apples comparisons of the prices being offered by retailers. The OEB has drafted a standard contract to be used by all electricity retailers that eliminates the fine print and spells out the total cost. That's what we need while that moratorium is in place. And direct the OEB to launch an effective, non-partisan public education campaign that tells consumers what to look for and be careful of when signing electricity contracts. Of course, the government's inaction on this front is particularly alarming, given the fact that its own electricity retailing company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Hydro One, has been operating under the misleading name of Ontario Hydro Energy and has been engaging in these questionable practices.

Seniors are being told their hydro will be disconnected if they don't sign the contract being presented to them. There have actually been forgeries of signatures taking place and misrepresentations by the company involved. Electricity retailers are engaging in that kind of forgery, misleading vulnerable people, lying about the nature of the contracts being signed and, in the vernacular, ripping off the consumers of the province.

Here's what I think consumers should know—and this information should be available to them: does the retailer have a licence from the Ontario Energy Board; what is the price per kilowatt hour of the electricity being offered, and how does it compare with the offerings of other retailers; is a fixed price subject to change in the future; how long is the contract, and can it be cancelled or changed; are there penalties involved in cancelling or changing; and can you purchase green or renewable power with the contract? Of course, the advice is do not show retailers your existing electricity bills until you have agreed to sign a contract with the company. If you choose to sign with a retailer, you have to ask, as well, is the power supply guaranteed?

This government, for months and months, simply closed its eyes to this particular problem while we in the opposition raised these issues. At my constituency office I've heard from a number of consumers who are bewildered, frankly, with the tactics that are being used by individuals who are representing electricity retailers.

If there's one area where we have a responsibility as elected representatives, it is to protect consumers, protect

the public we represent from this kind of fraudulent, misleading activity that can cost them in the long run. I feel particularly sorry for people who are perhaps in bad health, the extremely elderly and so on, who are being badgered by these electricity retailers to sign contracts that would be unwise for them to sign.

I am very supportive of this resolution. I hope that all members of the House will vote for it. It makes good common sense, and in the long run it will help protect electricity consumers in Ontario.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It's my pleasure to have a few minutes to join in the debate on Mr Brown's resolution.

Since May 1, we've had the opening of the electricity market, and its generally gone pretty smoothly. Since the market opened we've seen the price of electricity go from the regulated 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour to pretty much averaging around 3 cents per kilowatt hour for the whole month of May. That's been good news; the price is down. It's a 30% drop in the price of electricity since the market opened. I think we can all be very pleased with that.

But of course with a competitive market, as the summer heats up, there is the risk that prices will go up as demand goes up, and if one of the large generating plants has problems or goes off-line, there's certainly a possibility that prices would go up. That's why there's a role to be played by retailers who are selling fixed-price contracts for those people that want to take the risk out of the market. Very much like you make a decision when you go to the bank for a mortgage as to whether you borrow money at prime plus one or two—or whatever the banks are lending at—or whether you decide you don't want to take that risk and you want to lock in at a fixed price for five years, retailers allow the electricity customers to do just that.

1150

But I'd like to point out that many of the concerns expressed in this resolution, the ideas such as "introduce a standard contract used by all electricity retailers, forcing retailers to provide 'apples to apples' price comparisons to protect consumers," are covered in Bill 58, which was just introduced last week in the Legislature. If Bill 58 is passed by this Legislature, consumer protection measures would be even tougher. The bill would enact a new energy consumers' bill of rights which would place new requirements on gas and electricity retailers dealing with consumers, including giving government the authority to prescribe the content presentation of contracts, to ensure that important information is presented clearly and factually to the consumer, very much like what Mr Brown is asking for. It prohibits other unfair practices. It prohibits false advertising. The bill would provide for the Ontario Energy Board to have new enforcement powers, such as enhanced powers through order compliance and the power to order administrative penalties for these new offences.

The bill also enhances a consumer's cancellation rights—I think this is very important—after signing a contract. The existing 10-day right to cancel would be

replaced with a 30-day right to cancel. The contract would only be effective if the customer reaffirmed it. The negative renewal option would no longer be an option. The customer has to renew it.

Bill 58 is addressing many of these concerns, and if it's approved by this House, the consumers would be further protected.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I'm pleased to join the discussion about my colleague Mike Brown's private member's resolution. Let me begin by saying that I will be supporting the resolution, as I support any meaningful initiative that strengthens consumer protection and strengthens the government's ability to review the conduct of electricity retailers in the province.

All of us know and have stories about retail scam, fraud, call it what you will. One of our members has had his name forged twice, and the matter is under criminal investigation. Hundreds of contracts have been signed in my community by people over the course of the last two years, and I must say, it's unfortunate that we have not had the resources available to assist people in these decisions leading up until now.

The government has, in my view, a relatively weak bill before this House that does not have, in the opinion of the official opposition, Dalton McGuinty, the kind of teeth or commitments needed to protect consumers from the types of unscrupulous practices that have been going on. I should say that, while these practices are offensive by their nature—one cannot cast aspersions on all retailers. But there are significant enough examples, particularly in the rural, eastern and northern parts of the province, that the resolution that Mr Brown has put before us today merits our serious attention and concern. Moreover, it ought to have been done by the government probably a year or two ago. Many of these contracts are signed and they are a fait accompli. Therefore, a review of these retailers and their practices up until now is logical, regardless of what you think of the bill introduced to this House this week.

The whole issue of hydro privatization, the whole question around this complex matter, has been the focus of much debate in the Legislature this month and frankly is the focus of considerable debate in communities across the province. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have laid out the only clear, consistent alternative to the Conservative package. We oppose the privatization of Hydro One. We support competition in the generation of hydro. We do believe and support initiatives that will see strengthened consumer protection.

It's interesting. Oftentimes when we ask questions about these contracts, we're told, "Have them call the OEB," as we heard the Minister of Energy say the other day. Well, just try to get through to the OEB. Try to get a human being to take a phone call, let alone to do an investigation on a case-by-case basis. On the limited number of concerns that have been raised by various members of our caucus, one can only conclude there are tens of thousands of people out there who could benefit from the provisions outlined in Mr Brown's resolution. It

affects seniors mostly. In my riding I get called all the time by senior citizens saying, "What do you advise we do?" I tell them what I think they should do, and that is, don't sign something you're not comfortable with, because once you're signed on, that's it.

I support this resolution. I hope the House will as well. It's appropriate and timely.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has two minutes to reply.

Mr Brown: I want to express my appreciation to the members for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, Sarnia-Lambton, Beaches-East York, Mississauga Centre, St Catharines, Parry Sound-Muskoka and Windsor-St Clair for providing advice on this resolution.

I say to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, this motion has nothing to do with the retailing of electricity. I support a retail market in electricity. However, I do not think it is appropriate to have door-to-door sales or telephone solicitation of that. So don't confuse the two issues.

What this resolution is asking, at least in that particular section, is, do you think the people of Ontario want a door-to-door salesman appearing at suppertime, breakfast time, lunchtime or when you're on your way to the shower? Do you want some person coming to your door to sell a product you didn't know you needed to buy, other than through what you were already doing? Is that what it was about? Do you believe that you and Ontarians want people to phone at 5 or 6 o'clock, just as you're sitting down to supper, and getting you up from your dinner?

If you are in favour of those kinds of intrusive practices, vote against this resolution. If you think the public would be better served by rational discussion of how to deal with this matter, vote for it.

The Acting Speaker: The time for private members' public business has expired.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'EMPLOI DES POMPIERS VOLONTAIRES

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): We will deal first with ballot item number 47. Mr Arnott has moved second reading of Bill 30. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There will be a five-minute bell and we will delay that bell until after we have considered the next resolution.

ELECTRICITY CONTRACTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 48. Mr Brown has moved

the resolution. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1159 to 1204.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'EMPLOI DES POMPIERS VOLONTAIRES

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): We will now deal with ballot item number 47. Mr Arnott has moved second reading of Bill 30. All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.
Baird, John R.	Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia
Beaubien, Marcel	Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan
Boyer, Claudette	Hastings, John	O'Toole, John
Clement, Tony	Hodgson, Chris	Patten, Richard
Coburn, Brian	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Conway, Sean G.	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	McMeekin, Ted	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Bountrogianni, Marie	Levac, David	Sergio, Mario
Bradley, James J.	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Brown, Michael A.	Martel, Shelley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Bryant, Michael	Martinuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Caplan, David	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Colle, Mike	McDonald, Al	Wood, Bob
Crozier, Bruce	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Duncan, Dwight	Ouellette, Jerry J.	
Ecker, Janet	Peters, Steve	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 32; the nays are 28.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker: Order. I'd like you to be here for the next vote.

I also want to address to the gallery that there are absolutely no demonstrations from the gallery. In spite of how we act down here, we don't allow it from you.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be referred to committee?

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I would request that the bill be sent to the standing committee on justice and social policy.

The Acting Speaker: Those in favour of the bill being referred to the justice and social policy committee will please rise.

Those opposed will please rise.

A majority is in favour of the bill being referred to the justice and social policy committee.

ELECTRICITY CONTRACTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): We will now deal with ballot item 48, private member's resolution 1, standing in the name of Mr Brown.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I'm sorry. There will be 30 seconds for those seeking entrance or egress.

We will now deal with ballot item 48.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	McDonald, Al
Arnott, Ted	Cunningham, Dianne	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	O'Toole, John
Boyer, Claudette	Hodgson, Chris	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Levac, David	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Marland, Margaret	Sergio, Mario
Coburn, Brian	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Martiniuk, Gerry	
Conway, Sean G.	Mazzilli, Frank	

Nays

Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Spina, Joseph
Beaubien, Marcel	Hastings, John	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Molinari, Tina R.	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	Sampson, Rob	Young, David

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 31; the nays are 24.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the resolution carried.

This being the completion of private members' business, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1213 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I want to make the House aware today of the leadership of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board in their undertaking to

attempt to help the Eves government understand how its grave underfunding has affected students in the Ottawa area.

The new Premier and the new Deputy Premier pretend they listen and make small overtures to pretend they are fixing problems left by Mike Harris. This particular board has put the government on notice. They will not jeopardize their children's education. This board told the government last year that the funding formula was flawed. Here we go again. To meet the needs of students, the board would have to enter into deficit financing, except that this time there are no reserves to use.

You see, following the minister's directive last year, in implementing a budget they had to use all their reserve funds of \$20 million. This board is not being unreasonable or fiscally irresponsible. They told the new minister the matter is urgent and asked her to appoint a qualified investigator to examine the financial condition of the board immediately.

They can't wait until November. The children can't wait until November. By September, the board won't be able to pay their bills. In the words of the chair of the board, "The time has come to make students a priority." I'm asking the minister to show that students are a priority for her and grant an additional \$32.5 million in emergency funding to this school board. I'm asking her to appoint the investigator the board has asked for, so that she will finally understand the real effects her government cuts are having on our school children in the Ottawa area.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Regions and communities across this province have been enduring and suffering serious and dramatic physician shortages. Niagara region and its communities are among the hardest hit. The shortage of physicians has dramatically worsened in the seven years since the Tories have been in power here at Queen's Park.

A couple of weeks ago I met with Aggie Emerson and Nancy Dmytrow Bilboe, members of the Welland medical recruitment committee. They explained to me the efforts that are being undertaken on behalf of the residents of the community of Welland, which are similar to efforts on behalf of residents in other communities in Niagara. They detailed for me some of the incredible bureaucratic bungling, hurdles and red tape this government persists in maintaining for doctors who do want to come here from other jurisdictions to practise medicine.

This government is directly responsible for the worsening doctor shortage. I've written to the Minister of Health, Tony Clement. I've asked him to please meet with members of the Welland medical recruitment committee. Let them submit to Mr Clement, the Minister of Health, detailed explanations and examples of the types of hurdles that exist that prohibit doctors who want to come to Ontario, and they've got real-life examples as illustrations. They're prepared to work with

the Minister of Health to help solve the problem; the Minister of Health persists in maintaining and worsening the problem.

ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I rise today to honour all the men and women who fought for our freedom 58 years ago today. The beginning of the end of the war in Europe started on a blustery day on the coast of Normandy, where thousands of British, Canadian and American troops stormed ashore in the early morning hours of June 6, 1944. Fighting their way off the beaches amid a hail of bullets, they managed to hold a beachhead, despite desperate German attempts to dislodge them. In less than one year the Second World War would be over.

Several Georgina residents took part in the invasion, and their sacrifices, along with those who served in Canada's armed forces, were recognized on Saturday and Sunday with the annual candlelight tribute at Briar Hill Cemetery in Sutton in my riding of York North.

Sam Doggart, veteran of the bloody fighting in Europe, spearheaded the campaign. The Georgina Guides, Scouts and Cadets mark the graves of servicemen and women in the cemetery with a Canadian flag. Later, a lighted candle is placed on each grave, burning throughout the night and into the next day, Sunday.

Mr Doggart has extended his campaign this year to include Fenelon Falls, Aurora, Newmarket and Vaughan. Local church groups have also been given flags and candles to place on the graves of veterans in their church cemeteries.

This program not only pays tribute to the sacrifices of Canada's fallen soldiers, but also instills in the young people taking part "the traditions of sacrifice made to keep freedom alive."

CANCER SCREENING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): More than three years have now passed since an expert panel from Cancer Care Ontario, funded by the Ministry of Health, presented its report on screening for colorectal cancer. The expert panel recommended that a screening program be put in place for individuals over 50. That recommendation was supported by the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, the Ontario Association of Gastroenterology and the Ontario Association of Pathologists. Yet three years later there is still no screening program in place and no one is saying why. Why is the saving of a life not worth the investment in a \$20 test?

Earlier this week the Ontario Association of Radiologists released a study on waiting times for diagnostic tests. It was shocking to see that in 75% of the hospitals surveyed, people have to wait more than two weeks for a barium enema fluoroscopy, a test that is used to diagnose suspected colorectal cancer. In 25% of those hospitals,

people are waiting eight to 10 weeks to find out if they have cancer and should start treatments.

Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cancer killer for both men and women in Ontario, and Ontario has one of the highest rates of colorectal cancer in the world. More than 6,000 Ontarians are diagnosed with colorectal cancer every year, and every year more than 2,000 Ontarians die from it. It doesn't need to be happening. The probability of curing colorectal cancer is 90% when it is caught early. It is absolutely essential that the government act now to save lives. They should implement the screening program recommended by Cancer Care Ontario three years ago, and they should ensure people don't have to wait weeks to get the tests that will determine whether they need treatment.

ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): On behalf of my constituents in Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, it is my honour today to mark the 58th anniversary of D-Day. All in all, Canada contributed a fifth of the fighting troops assaulting the German defences that day. The ships of the Royal Canadian Navy and the bombers and fighters of the Royal Canadian Air Force were in the forefront of the forces guarding the invasion troops and softening up the German defences.

I want to pay special tribute to the three platoons of our own Lorne Scots regiment who went ashore and made Brampton and Canada proud that day. In 1944 Canada carried its weight among the international community, unlike today.

I was pleased to see that the Minister of Veterans Affairs announced federal funding of \$1 million to the Juno Beach Centre Association. This will assist in the establishment of the Juno Beach Centre in Normandy, France. The centre should be ready by next year. I say, it's about time. There isn't a Canadian memorial that marks these achievements anywhere. Sometimes it seems to me that the only part of military history the federal government has bothered to preserve is those 40-year-old flying death traps they call Sea King helicopters.

Canadians and free people everywhere owe our veterans more than can be repaid. I speak for everyone in Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale when I thank and remember those brave soldiers, sailors and airmen.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The report of the select committee on alternative fuels provides an excellent road map for the government of Ontario to drastically reduce our dependency on non-renewable, polluting fossil fuels and replace them with clean, renewable energy sources.

Unfortunately, to implement the far-reaching recommendations, the Eves government would have to completely reverse its energy and environment policies and bring them into the 21st century. Evidence of this is

found in the shocking and unbelievable answers that Environment Minister Chris Stockwell gave to my question regarding the conversion of dirty, pollution-laden, coal-fired electric generating stations operated by Ontario Power Generation, of which his government is supposed to have complete control, to natural gas.

When asked to implement the recommendations of the alternative fuels committee report, the minister, in full rant mode, looking to his own members and the press gallery for approval, replied that "the only way he wants to get up to number one is to close down all our infrastructure, close down all our plants, close down all our manufacturing and lay everybody off and put them on welfare."

If anyone believes that the minister and the Eves government have any stomach for implementing the progressive, imaginative, comprehensive and far-reaching recommendations of the alternative fuels committee report, he would be dreaming in Technicolor.

This government has made enormous, damaging cuts to the Ministry of the Environment, allows the dirtiest gas in Canada to be sold in Ontario, looks the other way while polluting industries belch out pollutants and has abandoned public transit and refused to promote energy conservation.

1340

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): As a proud Canadian of British origin, I am pleased to rise today in order to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Only four previous monarchs have achieved this milestone.

The past 50 years have marked vast change, but throughout that time there has been one constant: the dignity, grace and leadership of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

It was an ordinary Wednesday in 1952 when Princess Elizabeth, who was in Kenya at the time, ascended to the throne on the death of her father, King George VI. Following the funeral of King George VI and the 16-week period of court mourning, there was opportunity for celebration the following year with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey on June 2, 1953. I remember that day well.

From the earliest days of her reign, the Queen took up her new role with energetic commitment. Taking up her duties as head of the Commonwealth in earnest, the Queen embarked on a series of overseas visits, including Canada. As head of the diverse nations of the Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth has taught us many lessons about the importance of respecting the diversity within our own population here in Canada. Since those early days 50 years ago, the Queen has travelled the world and paid many visits to Canada.

On behalf of all members of this House, I extend our very best wishes to the Queen on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee. God save the Queen.

LEGAL AID

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I want to speak to the legal aid crisis that Ontario is currently going through. The failure to increase legal aid tariffs over the past 15 years has meant that many communities across this province do not have counsel providing legal aid work, even though demand is increasing across the province.

The people who suffer are all of those single moms, kids, Ontarians who need access to justice, particularly on family law matters, and they're not getting it. At the same time, this failure to increase legal aid tariffs further disadvantages low-income Ontarians.

The Chief Justice of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, stated recently, "Providing legal aid to low-income Canadians is an essential public service.... The well-being of our justice system ... and the public's confidence in it ... depend on it. If legal aid fails, justice fails."

Yet in Ottawa, Brantford, Owen Sound, Kingston, London, Sault Ste Marie, Toronto, Brockville, Hamilton, Peterborough, St Catharines and other communities, legal aid services are being withdrawn because the government refuses to respond to Legal Aid Ontario and Legal Aid Ontario coalition submissions just to update the legal aid tariffs.

It's about access to justice, and our entire justice system depends on it. It's time for the government to update legal aid tariffs in Ontario.

RANDY HOSACK

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre): I rise today to recognize the passing of an outstanding public servant, Randy Hosack. I wish to extend sincere condolences on behalf of the Honourable Bob Runciman, Minister of Public Safety and Security, and myself to Mr Hosack's family, friends and co-workers.

Mr Hosack served the public in the Ministry of Correctional Services for 34 years, and he was deputy superintendent at Sprucedale Youth Centre in Simcoe. Mr Hosack was actually due to retire on July 1 of this year, after a very accomplished career. Indeed, he was described by his colleagues as the cornerstone of Sprucedale.

His family, friends and colleagues numbered in the hundreds at the memorial service held on the grounds of Sprucedale over the weekend to honour him and to pay their respects to his wife, Pat; his son, Paul, who is a lawyer in Simcoe; and his grandson, Brock.

On behalf of Minister Runciman, I would like to express my gratitude for his many years of service to the people of this province. Deputy Superintendent Hosack served our province well. He touched the lives of many people, colleagues and especially the youth who now collectively mourn his passing.

The fine career of Mr Hosack is what excellence in public service is all about. Randy Hosack exemplified an outstanding public servant. He was an inspiration to many and will be truly missed.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 90, An Act to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste / Projet de loi 90, Loi visant à promouvoir la réduction, la réutilisation et le recyclage des déchets.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1346 to 1351.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Baird, John R.	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Marland, Margaret	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Maves, Bart	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	McDonald, Al	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Molinari, Tina R.	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Raminder	Newman, Dan	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hastings, John	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Hodgson, Chris	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Young, David
Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Boyer, Claudette	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 41; the nays are 23.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we get down to question period, the members may know this is

the last day for our pages. I'm sure all members would like to join me in thanking our pages on the last day. So on behalf of all the members, we want to thank the pages for the great and terrific work they've done. We've got a fine group of young people here today. I think I speak for all members when I say we wish them well in their endeavours. Some may be back here some day in another capacity.

VISITORS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Speaker: I'm sure this assembly would want to know that page Daniel Webster is joined today by his mother Beth Webster and his brothers Chris, Mikey and J.P. in the visitors' gallery.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PICKERING NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Today the Provincial Auditor rang alarm bells about the refurbishment of the Pickering A nuclear plant. In the Provincial Auditor's opening remarks, he made reference to "the publicly reported and significant cost overruns and delays being experienced in restarting the Pickering A nuclear plant." These are his words, not mine. The Provincial Auditor said, "The cost overruns and delays being experienced in restarting Pickering A ... could drive up electricity prices." These are his words, not mine. Aren't you concerned about this?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Yes, of course.

It's kind of surprising; I thought the first question would be on the auditor's report on Bruce, to be quite honest.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): We ask the questions. Just answer them, Chris.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm doing my best. I don't want to try to organize the question period agenda for you, but I'm kind of surprised, considering they were on the record about what a terrible deal Bruce was. I guess today the auditor came in and said no, it wasn't such a terrible deal, so now you're asking us about Pickering.

Am I to conclude, since you were opposed to us moving forward on leasing Bruce, that now that you have the auditor's report saying it's not a bad thing, you think we should move forward and maybe lease Pickering as well? I'm just kind of curious.

Mr Bryant: So today you're concerned about Pickering A, right? Ontario Power Generation has driven a refurbishment of Pickering A \$1.5 billion over budget. It's months behind and \$1.5 billion over budget. You say you're concerned about it. But yesterday you said of the

president of the company that did this, Ontario Power Generation, "I think he's done a good job." Good job? Over budget by \$1.5 billion? I ask the energy minister what he would have to do to do a bad job?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm getting the impression that you'd like us to do with Pickering what we did with Bruce. I'm kind of surprised, because I recall very clearly that you guys were opposed to what we did leasing out Bruce. You said it was a terrible deal for the taxpayer—awful, awful. I'm kind of surprised that now you're standing up and saying, "Pickering is a problem." Would you be suggesting to us, "Gee, you guys were very bright when you went and leased out Bruce. You did a great job on the Bruce issue. We got jobs, investment, prosperity and power on the grid." Maybe you're seeing your way clear to why we should be in government, because we had the foresight to make that deal. Are you thinking now that maybe we should do the same thing at Pickering as we did at Bruce? Because if you're saying that, it's a complete reversal of your previous position; some would even suggest a flip-flop.

Mr Bryant: In 2002, Ron "Good Job" Osborne received over half a million dollars in additional compensation for long-term performance. He gets half a million dollars as a bonus in 2002 for running Pickering A \$1.5 billion over budget. He got a \$500,000 bonus to run a company \$1.5 billion over budget, just on Pickering A to date. What do you have to do not to get a bonus? What do you have to do? Will you review this half a million dollars in additional compensation for long-term performance in light of the fact that the Provincial Auditor has raised these concerns which you apparently share?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm making headway. They've finally realized it was a long-term bonus. We've made headway. It's taken three days to go from annual income. They've backed off that a little bit. Today they finally admit it's a long-term bonus spread over three years. We're making yards here.

In response to the question, that long-term bonus is applied over three years. The long-term bonus continues again for the next three years. If Pickering doesn't meet the standards set down by the board, there is no bonus. That's how the process works. So the good thing about this is that when you run a good company and you make money, you can make a bonus. If Pickering doesn't meet its targets, if Pickering goes over, there's no bonus there. That's how it works. That's how it makes sense. But I feel relieved, vindicated that after two days you finally understand it's a long-term bonus.

1400

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is for the Minister of Energy. It has to do with the issue of Hydro One and how the government got us in this position. I want to go back to 1999, when Hydro One was established. The government hand-picked the board,

and I remember the proud announcement of the board appointments. The Premier at that time was the Deputy Premier. I assume that the board understood the direction the government wanted to head in.

My question is this: when the government appointed the Hydro One board, did they have clear direction from the government of where you wanted to take Hydro One, and did you get assurance from the board that they would follow that direction?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Being the Minister of Energy for I think six or seven weeks, and the appointments took place, I would suggest, in 1999, which was over three years ago, I can't personally respond to the question with respect to clear direction. I would suggest to you, though, that when you hand-pick a board—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I guess we've got cackling from the member.

We would appoint a board. I would presume that they had meetings with the people involved and there would be some direction. I would imagine that direction was given, yes.

Mr Phillips: I would have thought that when the decision was made to fire these people, due diligence was done, that a responsible minister would have gone back and reviewed the record. According to your predecessor, Mr Wilson, the problem with the board goes way back. He says that every time we expressed abhorrence, they would increase the exit package. In other words, 18 months ago or two years ago the board was deliberately disobeying the direction of the shareholder, represented by the government. Every time Mr Wilson would raise his concern about the abhorrent salaries, they would do the opposite and head in the other direction.

The taxpayers, the public of Ontario, would expect, if that were the case, that the government would send them a letter, that the government would put on the record to the board, "We disagree with this. We find this abhorrent and we insist that you stop." There would be minutes of meetings between Mr Wilson—and I gather he met regularly with the chair. My question to you is this: if the board was deliberately disobeying the government, the taxpayers and was acting in an abhorrent fashion, will you table today the communications that the government, on behalf of the taxpayers, sent to the board telling them that this was unacceptable?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Since being Minister of Energy, I have had a very short period of time in dealing with this board. My experience is that in fact they acted unilaterally, without discussing things with me, without informing me. Clearly, May 17 is a perfectly good example. Therefore, as Minister of Energy, I sent a letter directing them to do certain things that they didn't do. I then said, "Well, they're not going to do it. I know I can count on my opposition members in this House to support a bill brought in to remove this board of directors." The only mistake I made was in expecting opposition members to be on the side of the taxpayers. They're not, so I have to

count on my friends on this side of the House to represent taxpayers. When we did send the letter, when we did make a move, all you two have done is obstruct the protectionist legislation we put in for the taxpayers. Shame on you. A decision was taken. You're obstructing it.

Mr Phillips: We're dealing with an extremely serious matter, one of the province's most valued assets. We're dealing with a government that hand-picked these people, that told us they were overseeing them as they made decisions. The minister, on behalf of the government, said that he met regularly with them. He told us that there was abhorrent behaviour. I say to you, Minister, that you have a responsibility. If in fact this board was disobeying the directions of the government, I'm asking you today to table the evidence of their disregard of Mr Wilson's direction on salaries, where he has accused the board of disobeying the government months ago, well before you were. I'm challenging you today, table the evidence of what Mr Wilson did to bring this board in line that was clearly, he is saying—not the board but he said they disregarded and didn't follow his direction. Table that evidence.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I challenge the member opposite, why don't you do the right thing, why don't you stand up for the taxpayers? You spent weeks and weeks and weeks challenging this government and the board of directors. I challenge the members opposite, why don't you do the right thing? You know the people in your ridings are telling you to do the right thing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Too loud. Minister.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I challenge you members to do the right thing. A bill was tabled in this House to correct the circumstances surrounding the Hydro One board. You have one of two options: you can side with Sir Graham Day and the board of directors of Hydro One or you can side with the good people of Ontario. We're with the good people of Ontario, and apparently you're with Sir Graham Day.

BRUCE NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, you repeatedly say that the reason your government wants to privatize our hydro is so you can pay down Hydro's debt. But the Provincial Auditor said today that after you privatized the Bruce nuclear plant you lost \$215 million in payments on the debt in the first year alone. The auditor says that in future years less money will be available to pay down Hydro's debt because British Energy gets to keep all the profits. Deputy Premier, how is your privatization deal good for hydro ratepayers when it cost the people \$214 million in the first year alone?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'll refer that to the Minister of Finance.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): This is not only a good deal for Ontario taxpayers, this is a very good deal for Ontario electricity users and a very good deal for the community that this plant is located in. Not only did we get a \$370-million upfront payment, we also have new power coming on stream; new power that's coming on stream at lower cost.

We have more jobs in this community. Perhaps the honourable member from the NDP doesn't think that saving a thousand jobs is worth an investment by this government. Perhaps the honourable member doesn't think that 260 brand new jobs—unionized jobs, which I would think the honourable member from the third party might appreciate—are worth the investment and the decision that this government made to lease the Bruce plant.

Mr Hampton: Well, Minister, the auditor also points out that that loss of payment on the debt is going to continue year after year after year. He points out that when you examine the Bruce nuclear deal, and you look at it over that period of time, it is a huge loss in terms of debt payments, something your government always talks about. That means the people of the province have to pick it up through higher hydro rates. Why are those debt payments not being made? Because your corporate friends, your buddies, the pockets that you want to pad, get to keep all of the money. Admit it, Minister, the Provincial Auditor blew the whistle on you today. This isn't a good deal on debt payment. This isn't a good deal for hydro ratepayers. This is simply a good deal for your privatized friends.

1410

Hon Mrs Ecker: I appreciate that the Provincial Auditor is looking at simple accounting facts. If you want to make all government decisions based on what accountants tell you to do, you can do that, but I would advise that that is not a good government.

In this community we have jobs which we were not going to have. We have over \$1 billion of investment in this plant and \$15 million a year of economic investment in this community. The honourable member likes to say there are not going to be payments on the debt. Well, if the plant wasn't operating, if there were no profits, if there were no jobs, if there was no power, of course there aren't going to be payments on the debt, but that is not the case.

Mr Hampton: The minister should read the report, because the auditor compares what Ontario people would have gotten if we'd kept it and continued to run it. He says we would get more. Then he looks at what you get when you privatize it to British Energy.

The argument you use for privatizing Hydro One is the same. You say that if you privatize Hydro One, it will allow you to pay money down on the debt. But the auditor blew the whistle on you today. He says that the retained earnings are worth more, that by giving up the profits, giving up the retained earnings, you actually benefit your private sector friends and you punish the people of Ontario.

Admit it, Minister, the auditor blew the whistle on you today. Your privatization deals benefit the private sector and cost the hydro ratepayers more money—this year, next year and every year into the future.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I hate to break it to the honourable member—and perhaps it's because he's a member of the NDP that he doesn't understand this—but you can only have retained earnings when you have earnings. This plant was not going to be operating. This plant was not going to be producing electricity for Ontario electricity users.

The taxpayers have not borne the risk of the increased investment to get this plant going. We have \$1.2 billion of investment going into that plant. We have 1,000 jobs in that community—good jobs. We have 50 young people every year who are getting an opportunity to apprentice, to learn, to have good careers in the nuclear energy system. We have \$15 million of economic activity in that community every year. Maybe the honourable member thinks that's not worth the decision we made, but for that community, for Ontario taxpayers, for Ontario electricity users, it was a good deal.

PICKERING NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Energy and it concerns the Pickering nuclear station. The auditor went out of his way today to point out that the Pickering nuclear station is severely behind time in terms of its maintenance and renewal projects and it is over \$1 billion over budget. In other words, there's a real problem there. Yet we note that you're paying the head of Ontario Power Generation \$1.5 million in salary and even more in bonuses. Minister, can you tell me why you increase someone's salary when they're obviously doing such a bad job?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I don't believe his salary was increased. I believe the salary has been fairly consistent over the past three years. I don't know where you come to the conclusion that his salary was increased. If you're speaking about the long-term bonus that my friend from St Paul's understood finally today—after three days—that is over the previous three years.

I can only suggest to you that if Pickering—

Mr Hampton: Yes? Yes? Yes?

Hon Mr Stockwell: He has awoken from his dream sequence.

If I can just put it to you in a short answer, Pickering is of concern, but the good thing about the Pickering plant is that it wasn't included in our adequacy reports. We're trying to get it on stream as quickly as possible. It will reduce the price of hydro.

The adequacy reports as done by the IMO didn't include Pickering and it's considered we have an adequate supply of hydro, of power over the next few years. So all I can tell you is that was included. I understand the auditor spoke to the fact that he's concerned. Let's be

clear. The auditor just said he was concerned. He also said that he hasn't audited the books, that he hasn't looked at any of the finances, so it was a very, very qualified statement.

Mr Hampton: The auditor today went out of his way to say there's a serious problem at Pickering, and he went out of his way to say there is a significant risk of hydro price increases because of what has happened at Pickering and elsewhere. Before you became the government, the president of Ontario Hydro was paid about \$500,000. You become the government and you bump up Mr Osborne's salary to \$1.5 million plus bonuses. The auditor comes out today and says this guy is failing at his job in a way that can significantly hurt the people of Ontario. The president of Hydro-Québec has a salary of \$500,000. The president of BC Hydro has a salary of less than \$500,000. You've got one of your executives, who the auditor says is a failure, and you think he deserves a pay increase to \$1.5 million. Tell us how you defend that.

Hon Mr Stockwell: It really does beg the question of how you defended the salary you paid Maurice Strong, the maharishi. How you defend that salary—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: It didn't start out as a dollar, my friend. It started out as a million dollars. That's what it started out as. Then you found out he was so bad you cut him down to a buck because he was buying rainforest land in Costa Rica. That's what your leader did at Hydro, and ran up huge debt and let the rates increase and continued to push up the debt further and further. The fact of the matter is that Mr Osborne has done a good job in the previous three years of organizing OPG. Let's be clear. If there are losses so that they don't meet certain requirements, certain measurements, then there will be no bonus at all. He's already said there is no long-term bonus next year; he's not getting anything. So the fact is these are tied to performance. In the previous three years they performed well. If there's a point in Pickering, which we didn't count in the adequacy report, if it isn't proved to be effective and brought on stream reasonably well and financially on budget, there's no bonus at all. That's how it works. I say to the member of the third party, there isn't a bonus, so we're not paying a bonus. That bonus you talked about was over the previous three years.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Minister of Energy. It's about who knew what and when in the government when it comes to the compensation package of Captain Clitheroe and the crew of Hydro One. Today there seems to be a bit of a mix-up out there, which maybe you can clarify in here. You had said you first informed the Premier of the executive compensation packages of the executive officers of Hydro One in April. But then today the Premier said that the first time he became aware of this was May 16. There's a wire story running that says Stockwell insisted yesterday that you

personally told the Premier in April about the compensation. Who is telling the truth? Did you tell him in April or did you tell him in May?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I know the member is a lawyer, so he's a good detail guy, I presume. I think he should check the details of that story. Just look at the story. Do you notice any quotations around that? There are no quotations around that quote because I never said it. I absolutely never said that. You will know that the reporter who is reporting this—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm doing my best to respond. It's hard to ask and answer the questions at the same time. I'm doing my best to respond. If you want to look at that story, you might note that it is not in quotations. I never said that, never intimated that and that story is completely and factually inaccurate. It's not good journalism. The only thing that's protecting him is he didn't put it in quotes. You know why? Because I never said it.

1420

Mr Bryant: I've got a couple of questions. Why did you not tell the Premier? Why did you sit on this information and not tell the Premier? You're the Minister of Energy. The Premier has said he is outraged by the executive compensation, absolutely outraged. You say you're outraged by the executive compensation and yet you sat on that information. One day your story is that you told him in April; today you're telling us that you told him in May.

There's this doctrine of deniability over there. We've got speak-no-evil Wilson, we've got see-no-evil Eves, and we've got hear-no-evil Stockwell, who walks into the ministry and says to everybody, "For goodness' sake don't tell me about what happened before I got appointed. I don't want to have to answer it in the House." When are you going to tell people what's going on? Answer the questions. Stop ducking. Rip off the veil of secrecy. What have you got to hide? Give us some answers. Why was this government asleep at the switch while Hydro One sank the electricity transmission highway? What have you got to hide?

Hon Mr Stockwell: You notice he didn't quote the story, because he knows it wasn't in quotations. Now he has changed directions and the supplementary question is completely different. I'll accept that as some kind of withdrawal on the first part.

The second part, with respect to informing the Premier: I informed the Premier. We decided we were going to deal with this—

Interjection: When?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I informed the Premier some time after—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Sorry, Minister.

Hon Mr Stockwell: This is hilarious from this opposition party. They had their own leader standing up

here on December 12 telling us he's in favour of privatizing transmission. You've got nerve across the floor. Then he said, "Oh, no, I was thinking too quickly, and when I think too quickly, I say things I shouldn't say." Now you're challenging us over here. How do we know when your leader is thinking too quickly and when he's thinking, as he normally does, too slowly?

PETERBOROUGH REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): We heard about Andy and Opie earlier this week. I'm going to talk about Aunt Bea.

My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. On Tuesday, June 4, the member from Windsor West held a press conference and released a communiqué that contained erroneous information about the hospital in my riding, the Peterborough Regional Health Centre. The member opposite claimed that waiting times for radiology services are increasing and our government has done nothing to address this problem. Once again the member and her Liberal cronies are ill-informed. Minister, you and I know that this indeed is not the situation. Can you please provide the House and residents in my riding with some clarity on this issue?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for the question. If I was on the other side of the House, I'd be putting out some pink slips to the fact checkers who work for the Liberal caucus.

The member for Windsor West once again failed to check those facts before making claims against our government and against our health care system in this province. After her erroneous press conference, we were contacted by the Peterborough Regional Health Centre concerning the matter. First, when discussing the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, the member claimed that the waiting lists for nuclear medicine and cardiac procedures were 10 weeks long. If she'd taken the time to do any research on her own, she soon would have realized that Peterborough Regional does not even offer the procedure. They're not even in that business. It's a non-hospital procedure conducted through a medical clinic.

The member for Windsor West also claimed that residents of Peterborough have obscene wait times for radiology services and so on. Officials from Peterborough Regional have assured us, just as they have assured the community, that each and every emergency or urgent-care patient requiring imaging will receive that treatment within 24 hours. The member opposite should stop fearmongering and—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Mr Stewart: It's unfortunate the member isn't here today. I hope she's somewhere getting some factual research. This is a most unfortunate situation. I believe that communiqué she released is an insult, an insult to the

doctors and the administration of Peterborough Regional Health Centre. I am absolutely aghast at what was said and I'm very disappointed in the member and the way she dealt with this issue. I truly believe that she owes Peterborough Regional Health Centre an apology for not consulting with them before making these accusations. Her arrogance, I believe, is unbelievable. Her lack of concern for health care—

The Speaker: Order. I'm not going to sit here and listen to you attack another member like that. Would you please get to the question? I said earlier in the week that I'm not going to allow personal attacks. You're not going to get up and attack people personally like that in questions. If you do it again, I'm going to cut you off and you're not going to get the question. You now have 10 seconds to wrap it up.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Given the allegations from the honourable member's preamble to his question, I think it's important to inform the House that the communiqué to which he's referring was from the Ontario Association of Radiologists; it was not issued by the member.

The Speaker: You've got 10 seconds to wrap up.

Mr Stewart: It's unfortunate that those comments were made to our doctors in Peterborough. Minister, can you please correct the false information for the member opposite and the residents in my riding?

Hon Mr Clement: It's important to correct the record. This is a serious matter, and some individuals in Peterborough have had their integrity impugned. The real wait times for diagnostic services—the member for Windsor West claimed that the wait list for a barium enema was five weeks; the truth is, for the urgent cases that should be done quickly, it's one week. An ultrasound, seven weeks; in fact, emergency ultrasounds are completed within 24 hours and the less urgent ones are within two weeks. The member claimed that the wait time for a mammogram was six weeks; the truth is that symptomatic mammography is completed in less than 48 hours and semi-urgent are completed within one week. The member claimed that the wait time for CT scans was six weeks; the truth is that emergency CT scans are completed immediately and urgent-care CT scans are completed within four weeks.

These are the facts. This is what is occurring in the community. If the honourable member wants to get elected, that's fine, but stick to the facts.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education. Every member in this House has students in their riding who right now are struggling. They're struggling in special education, and there are curriculum casualties that aren't getting their credits because of the actions of this government. There are rural and urban students who are insufficiently recognized.

Regarding these students in trouble, you said on May 9 that a review would start immediately to help them. It's not even action, Minister; you promised to study getting to some action. In the House every week you've referred to this review. I wonder if you could tell us today what the mandate of the review is, who the members of the committee are, how people can reach them, where their office is, how much staff they have and if you could give us the details of what you promised started on May 9 and how it's helping kids in Ontario.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm very pleased to respond to the member opposite because certainly our government is responding to the concerns of people in the province of Ontario. We put in place a new funding formula, which was introduced in 1998, and we were going to do a review commencing in 2003. However, based on the issues we heard, we felt it was appropriate to move that review up one year. So the review was announced in the throne speech. Dr Rozanski has been appointed to chair that review of the funding formula that is going to take place. I'm very pleased to say, as well, that work has been ongoing in order to ensure that people throughout the province of Ontario, no matter where they live, will have that opportunity to participate. The report will be submitted in November.

1430

Mr Kennedy: Minister, are you talking about issues? There are actually students who are hurting because of your clumsy de-funding formula. If you phone Mordechai Rozanski's office, they won't take your call. If you ask your ministers what the details are, as I did in a briefing, they say nothing has been decided, nothing has been done.

There are three weeks left in the school year. You said, when you were running as a leadership candidate, this would take 90 days to do. That's in the middle of July and you haven't even started yet. Fifty days have gone already. We put forward at the beginning of this week a critical action plan, things you should be doing right now to help students.

Minister, at least admit that you are part of a charade, that they have put you on the front line to try and make it look like something has happened, but nothing has happened. Why not go one better? Why not admit you don't have a plan, take the plan we put forward at the beginning of this week and start to help students right now instead of referring to a review you haven't even had the gumption to get started?

Hon Mrs Witmer: It would be more appropriate if the member opposite would truly focus on doing what is in the best interests of the students in the province of Ontario. What needs to happen is that we lower the temperature and we work together with all stakeholders, whether they are parents or teachers.

Today I have been meeting with teacher groups. I have been meeting with stakeholder groups. There is a lot of work that has been undertaken, and I want to tell the member opposite that we have already responded to the

concerns. We have announced this year, since our government took over, an additional \$350 million; we have introduced an additional \$65 million for textbooks and \$25 million for additional early literacy and early math.

The member opposite should check his facts. Much of the information you provided in your report is fiction. You have drawn the numbers out of thin air. They are not based on any—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Minister, as you know, the Ontario disability support program is intended to meet the needs of people with disabilities and help them become more independent. Recently a number of my constituents who receive ODSP have informed me there hasn't been an increase in ODSP since 1995. Minister, can you tell me what we are doing for Ontarians with disabilities?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague who so ably represents the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. This government has made changes that were long overdue, something that both the Liberals and the NDP never had the courage to do. They left Ontarians with disabilities languishing on a welfare system that never met their needs.

Our government believes it's important to take steps to make life better for the disabled. So, after listening to Ontarians with disabilities and their advocates, listening to what they have to say, we changed the system. We fulfilled our promise to move people with disabilities off the welfare system into a separate program and we removed the label "permanently unemployable." We protected the benefit rates from the old family benefits program, and in fact the rates for single Ontario disability program support recipients are now the highest among all the provinces.

Mr Miller: I'm happy to hear about the various changes our government has made to assist Ontarians with disabilities; however, some of my constituents and I have concerns for people with disabilities. Will the government consider what more can be done to improve the lives of people with disabilities?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I thank my colleague again. I remind my colleagues here in the House it was this Conservative government that introduced the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, one that neither the Liberals nor the NDP had the courage to introduce.

We know there will always be room for improvement within the ODSP but we have made significant progress. We have removed the label, as I said, of "unemployable" that was used under the former Family Benefits Act. We recognize that people who are disabled can and do want to work. We increased the amount of earnings that a

family can keep without deduction from \$185 under the former FBA to \$235 a month. We've provided a broad range of employment supports to assist people with disabilities to be able to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. We have raised the asset ceiling to \$5,000 for singles, \$7,500 for a couple and \$500 for each dependant.

There are programs now for incentives to participate and for additional—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time is up.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Today your Premier says he didn't learn about the bloated salaries and bonuses at Hydro One until three weeks ago. But yesterday your Minister of Energy said he personally informed the Premier about the bloated salaries and bonuses in April. The Premier in turn says he can't recall any of that.

Deputy Premier, millions of dollars of potential damages and legal fees are at stake here. We need to know who's telling the truth, the Premier or the Minister of Energy? Would you agree this should go to a legislative committee, so that the Premier can tell his story, the minister can tell his story and we can see who's telling the truth?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I'm sorry, I was out of the room, but I think the question was about information with respect to salaries.

I was informed, as I said earlier in this House, seven to 10 days after. I spoke to the Premier about it some time in the second week of May.

Mr Hampton: We're used to the Minister of Energy changing his story. One minute he says the government knew nothing about the bloated salaries, and six days later he stands up and says, "Oh, the government always knew about the bloated salaries." Then the minister says no one from the board told the government about the bloated salaries. You've said all these stories.

What I'm asking your government is, because potentially millions of dollars in damages and millions of dollars in legal fees are at stake, can you send this to a legislative committee so you guys can sort out your story over there?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I've said consistently that I was informed—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I hear the heckling from the professional heckler over there.

My story all along is that seven to 10 days after, I was informed; around the second week of May, I discussed this with the Premier. Shortly after that, he came into the House and told the House I was going to be investigating

the salary components at Hydro One. Then they changed the tune. They ratcheted up the message, and that changed our approach, because they were simply disregarding us as the single shareholder. That's the story.

We don't need a committee to determine what we knew when; we admit it—1999, everybody knew; 2000, everybody knew; 2001, everyone knew. We all know. Those details are out there; they're on the Web site.

Now, if he wants to have a committee to investigate some missing information, where's your letter, Howie? It's been three days since I've seen you. I've asked you to give me that letter, and now—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time is up.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Health. I want to ask you about 38-year-old Philip Rennie. He's an autistic man. He has the mental ability of a five- or six-year-old. Mr Rennie was ordered to have a psychiatric assessment. All 18 forensic beds at St Joseph's Hospital were full. As a result, this man, who has the mental ability of a five- or six-year-old boy, spent a week at the Hamilton-Wentworth—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I can't hear the question.

Member for Hamilton East, I'm sorry to interrupt.

Mr Agostino: Thank you, Speaker. This man, who has the mental ability of a five- or six-year-old, spent a week in a jail cell because there was no space at the hospital for him to be assessed in the psychiatric division they have. Minister, you shut down the psychiatric hospital in Hamilton. You promised there would not be a negative impact. The forensic unit continues to be full. Do you think it's appropriate in Ontario today for this man, with the mental ability of a five- or six-year-old who needs a psychiatric assessment ordered by the courts, to spend a week isolated in a jail cell because there was no room in the forensic unit of the psychiatric hospital in Hamilton?

1440

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for bringing the individual facts to my attention. I won't deal with an individual case.

I can tell this assembly that mental health funding, in terms of an envelope of spending by this government, topped \$2.64 billion, including close to \$700 million for hospital-based services. We are seeking from the mental health implementation task forces their recommendations on how best to provide community-based care in the wake of deinstitutionalization which, I take it, every member of this House agrees with, or certainly the caucuses of this House agree with, that deinstitutionalization is in fact preferable. We have to get the community supports in place, but in the meantime the expenditures and the commitment by this government are there.

Mr Agostino: Minister, you're obviously on the wrong briefing note because that had nothing to do with the question I asked. The reality is this: what happened in this situation is common across Ontario. In many situations, because of your cuts, the psychiatric hospitals and psychiatric beds—people who belong in psychiatric divisions are ending up in jail cells right across Ontario. St Joseph's Hospital has asked for 18 more forensic psychiatric beds. There is your answer. Your ministry has not responded. So all this cute little verbal—for lack of a better word—that we just received from the minister does absolutely nothing to help the situation.

Again, a man with the mental ability of a five- or six-year-old spent the week in a jail cell. That is not uncommon. That is happening across Ontario today. You've been asked for 18 more additional forensic beds in the unit at St Joseph's Hospital. Will you commit today to providing those beds and ensuring that what happened to this man will never happen to anyone else across Ontario, and commit yourself to reviewing the situations of psychiatric beds across Ontario and how many people who should be in hospitals are in jail cells because of your neglect and inaction?

Hon Mr Clement: I can certainly tell this House that since the election of 1995 there have been 446 new forensic beds that have opened across this province, and another 144 beds to go. Since 1995 we've added an additional \$377 million in mental health care services at the community level, including \$23.5 million for the community investment funding for case management, \$60 million in total for additional mental health beds and increased community-based services, and \$23.9 million for phase 1 of our mental health homelessness initiative. Those are just a few of the items. So in the wake of that, the investments have been there.

Now we have to make sure we have a comprehensive program for community-based care that is to replace institutionalization, and this government is in favour of that.

ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. I regularly get contacted by constituents who are extremely distressed because they're having a really hard time working through the maze of government services. Usually it's because they've lost their wallet. Of course, when you lose your wallet, you lose all your personal identification. You lose your birth certificate, your social insurance card, your driver's licence and so on. To get all this needed documentation involves dealing with a number of departments and even different levels of government. The worst part is that when you lose your wallet, you've lost all your identification. As soon as you go to a government agency, they want your identification so you can get the driver's licence or whatever. What are you doing to make access to government services a little bit easier for my constituents?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I appreciate the question from the member for Northumberland. I know how hard he works on behalf of the constituents in Northumberland and surrounding area.

There's no doubt that losing a wallet or a purse for identification has probably happened to many members of this House in the past. We have constituents who come in wondering how to deal with the maze of government services and forms they have to get filled out. We've made progress on this issue. We've created on our ministry Web site one-stop shopping to help with government forms to recover from situations like losing your wallet or preparing, for example, to have a baby and making sure you get a birth certificate.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): What's the Web site address?

Hon Mr Hudak: The Web site address the member for Nepean-Carleton asks for is www.cbs.gov.on.ca. There are helpful tips on the Life Event bundles. For example, if there's somebody at home watching on TV who is getting married this October, the Life Event bundles at the same time can help her with that situation. Instead of running from office to office, she can simply download the information, fill it out and make sure it is there at the altar come October 5.

Mr Galt: Congratulations, and that's good news. This new program is certainly good for my constituents as well as all Ontarians. We would really have enjoyed this kind of one-stop-shopping access to government services at the time that we were getting married, and that's some 40 years ago. We'd have enjoyed having something like a Web site, but not only that, we'd have enjoyed having things like computers or cellphones or voice mail or fax machines.

Interjection: Electricity?

Mr Galt: Even electricity.

I know that many of my constituents would love to take advantage of this Web site but they're either simply not comfortable enough with the Internet or they don't have access to a computer. Minister, what is the Eves government doing for citizens like these to benefit from the great services offered on the Life Events Web site?

Hon Mr Hudak: The member is right, not everybody can access it through the Web site, but it is at cbs.gov.on.ca. There may be some who want to access by telephone. From Brighton or Port Hope in Northumberland you can call 1-800-267-8097. If you're in eastern Ontario visiting Fort Henry, for example, as a tourist you could stop in at the local offices in Belleville, Lindsay, Peterborough or Kingston. If you're from Niagara, the office is in St Catharines on St Paul Street. There are 50 such government information centres across this province to help constituents deal better with the government to make sure they can help out with these life events, like you've lost your wallet, you're getting married, or you're having a baby, important events like that, where you interact with government—big steps taken. I thank the member for the question.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Minister of Finance. You've indicated to us that you will be tabling the budget before estimates are tabled on June 17, and we're looking forward to that. We're the last province in the country to table a budget.

When Mr Eves became finance minister in 1995 he promised to get rid of the two sets of books. Unfortunately, still as recently as last year when the budget was tabled, we had a completely different set of numbers in the estimates. In fact, in the Ministry of Health it was a \$900-million difference; in the Ministry of Education, a \$700-million difference. Will you promise us, commit today, that when you table your budget this year we will once and for all in this province be rid of the two sets of books?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): As you are no doubt aware, Ontario does tend to be traditionally a province that brings in its budget later than the other provinces. That practice has continued for many years. Second, we will be having a budget this spring. We will be making the announcement of the date very shortly.

I agree with the honourable member. We are following the advice we've received from a number of experts about how to move the province's books to an accounting mechanism that is transparent, to an accounting mechanism that is accountable to taxpayers, and we are indeed moving to do that in a very prudent fashion.

Mr Phillips: It's a bit laughable because Mr Eves, when he became finance minister in 1995—that's seven years ago—promised all this stuff. In November 1995 he said, "We're going to get rid of the two sets of books," and here we are seven years later, we've still got this charade of two sets of books and we're asked to approve one set of books that is billions of dollars different than the budget.

You told us that we will be getting the budget before estimates. We are expected, this province, to run on a businesslike basis. This is embarrassing. We're now two and a half months into the fiscal year. Mr Eves promised, by the way, in 1995 that we would have the budget before the fiscal year started. In the throne speech he finally agreed that next year we will.

My question is this: will we get the budget finally next week, two and a half months into the year? When our ministries are spending money two and a half months into the year, why in the world do we have to wait until the middle of June to get a budget? Will you commit to having the budget for next week, Minister?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The honourable member talks about being embarrassed. Well, he and his government were certainly not very embarrassed with the way they ran the books, with two sets of books and more taxes and more spending and running the province into trouble. He should have been embarrassed about that. Obviously he was not.

Second, as a Liberal, I would have thought that perhaps he might have been embarrassed about the way

the federal Liberals treated the finances of this country, siphoning money off into little trust funds that the auditor couldn't find, taxpayers never knowing where the finances of Ottawa really were, not bothering to table a budget at all. I would have thought that the honourable member, as a Liberal, would have been embarrassed at the behaviour of his federal cousins.

We will have a budget. We said we would do it. We will be honouring the Premier's commitment, as we said we would, and we will continue to manage the finances of this province in a very prudent, fiscally responsible manner.

1450

CRIME AGAINST SENIORS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. Every so often in my riding of Durham, I hear about scams and scammers who prey on seniors. These vultures make phone calls, send out dubious correspondence and even appear at the front doors of unsuspecting seniors, embarrassing them in their own homes. This is a complete shame. It's deplorable. What are we going to do to help seniors and their families protect themselves from financial fraud targeting the most vulnerable members of society?

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): This issue concerns all of us. We care about protecting our seniors from this type of crime. We street-proof our kids; we also need to fraud-proof our seniors. Our government is working hard to fraud-proof seniors, showing them what to watch for when a fraud-artist comes calling. A fraud-proof senior is a fraud-artist's worst nightmare. Seniors are learning to detect investment and home renovation fraud, and then they telephone the fraud line.

Some of the tools we use are fraud alerts, a fraud tips calendar, and seminars and educational material available through the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. We also refer seniors to a seniors' information line. Seniors have done a lot for this province. They deserve to live—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Your own minister is yelling. That's why.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Your own members are complaining. Supplementary?

Mr O'Toole: Thank you, minister, for that very comprehensive answer. I understand that it is not just the organized crime element that seniors must be protected from; often it is close friends and even neighbours and caregivers who mistreat seniors by having them write a cheque on their behalf or by physically or emotionally abusing them. Minister, what is our government doing to combat the very serious issue of elder abuse?

Hon Mr DeFaria: The member is correct, it is an unfortunate reality that many seniors fall victim to fraud and other financial abuses every year. Research done by Elizabeth Podnieks, Chair of the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, has documented that 4% to 10% of seniors suffer from abuse. Many do not even report these crimes because of shame or simply not knowing how or where to get help.

Our provincial government is the first in Canada to commit \$4.3 million toward fighting elder abuse. The strategy does three things: first, it provides for co-ordination of community services; secondly, it educates the public; and thirdly, it trains front-line workers who deal with seniors every day to recognize elder abuse. Our government wants seniors to know that they are not alone. Our government will insure that supports and people are there to help our seniors.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Deputy Premier, earlier this week we learned that Hydro One, publicly owned by the people of Ontario, was giving financial gifts to some of its favourite political parties: five grand to the Liberals and \$7,500 to the Tories. Then on June 4 we heard the Minister of Energy on CBC radio saying that \$7,500 isn't anywhere near enough money to buy influence with this government; it's not anywhere near the kind of money that's going to impress us to make a decision differently. Deputy Premier, if \$7,500 isn't anywhere near enough, how much is enough?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'll let the Minister of Energy respond to that.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): There is something very interesting here. I'd like to ask the member opposite, how much money did Eleanor Clitheroe give to the New Democratic Party in 1995? How much did they give you, I say to the NDP?

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm surprised you don't know. You know more about our finances and the Liberals' finances than you know about your finances. Yours should be easy to understand because you don't have any finances. Check back to 1995, my friends, check back to see if Eleanor Clitheroe gave some money to the NDP, and then start making allegations and charges to opposition parties about what they accept from certain associations.

My position on the radio show was simply this: if I was part of the Hydro One—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Holy smoke, I'm not really sure you Liberals should be heckling right now.

I said very clearly that if I were in charge of Hydro One, I wouldn't have donated to political parties, and I stick with that position.

PETITIONS**AUDIOLOGY SERVICES**

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I have a petition here—Rick Bartolucci, the member for Sudbury, and I have many petitions here—and the title is, “Listen: Our Hearing is Important!” It reads like this:

“Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

“Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

“Whereas the new Harris government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

“Whereas the new Harris government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved areas across Ontario; and

“Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services.”

I am in full agreement with Rick Bartolucci of Sudbury and the thousands of people who have signed this. Emily, I will give you this to give to the desk.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario will be considering a private member’s bill that aims to amend the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases; and

“Whereas optometrists are highly trained and equipped with the knowledge and specialized instrumentation needed to effectively diagnose and treat certain eye problems; and

“Whereas extending the authority to prescribe TPAs to optometrists will help relieve the demands on ophthalmologists and physicians who currently have the exclusive domain for prescribing TPAs to optometry patients; and

“Whereas the bill introduced by New Democrat Peter Kormos (MPP—Niagara Centre) will ensure that patients receive prompt, timely, one-stop care where appropriate;

“Therefore I do support the bill proposing an amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases and I urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage of the bill.”

I have affixed my signature as well.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): Mr Speaker, I have the intended business of the House for next week. Pursuant to standing order 55, the statement of business of the House for next week is as follows:

On Monday afternoon, debate will be on Bill 58, the reliable energy and consumer protection bill. On Monday evening we will continue debate on Bill 124, the building code.

On Tuesday afternoon, we will be debating Bill 124 again. Tuesday evening’s business will be Bill 80, the Hydro One Inc. Directors and Officers Act.

Wednesday afternoon will be a Liberal opposition day. Wednesday evening’s business will be Bill 90.

On Thursday morning, during private members’ public business, we will discuss ballot item number 49, standing in the name of Mr Hoy, and ballot item number 50, standing in the name of Mr Martin. Thursday afternoon’s business will be Bill 80. Thursday evening’s business is still to be determined.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): Mr Speaker, prior to presenting my petition, may I also ask that the clock perhaps could be set back, since the government whip did not present a petition but in fact the orders of the day?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I’ll do it with my own watch.

Mrs McLeod: Thank you. I have a petition to the provincial Legislature.

“Whereas the Conservative government promised to institute patient-based budgeting for health care services in the 1995 Common Sense Revolution; and

“Whereas community care access centres now face a collective shortfall of \$175 million due to a funding freeze by the provincial government; and

“Whereas due to this funding shortfall CCACs have cut back on home care services affecting many sick and elderly Ontarians; and

“Whereas these cuts in services are mostly in home-making services, forcing Ontarians into more expensive long-term-care facilities or back into hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately institute real patient-based budgeting for health care services, including home care, so as to ensure that working families in Ontario can access the care services they need.”

I am in full agreement with the concerns of my constituents and affix my signature to demonstrate that.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas many high school students in Ontario outraged at the harshness of the new curriculum choose to leave school on May 15, 2002;

“Inadequate funding made difficult the implementation of the new curriculum;

“High school students should not be used as forced labour in addition to the extra hours required for the new curriculum;

“There is inadequate funding for the double-cohort year. Universities and colleges will have trouble providing room for all those students;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“We demand that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students establish a funding model to correct the shortcomings in the system;

“Further be it resolved that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students make recommendations to help those students who have had to change their career paths due to the harshness of the new system;

“Further be it resolved that students are no longer to do compulsory volunteer work;

“Further be it resolved that adequate funding be given for the double-cohort year.”

I have affixed my signature as well.

Mrs Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): I have a petition here signed by parents of an elementary school in my riding.

“To the Ontario Legislature:

“Whereas the current government funding formula for education is not sufficient to meet the needs of Ontario school boards;

“Whereas the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) is currently faced with a large deficit;

“Whereas Viscount Alexander Public School, a school within the jurisdiction of the OCDSB, is suffering from lack of funds to meet the needs of its students;

“Whereas Viscount Alexander Public School has a higher than average percentage of English-as-a-second-language and special-education students and government cutbacks have had a debilitating impact on our school;

“Whereas the parent advisory committee of Viscount Alexander Public School supports the OCDSB in its efforts to seek additional funding;

“We, the majority of parents of Viscount Alexander Public School, gathered within a 24-hour period to appose our signatures, hereby petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the ... government review the education funding formula with a view to increasing it so that school boards and particularly the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board are able to meet their obligations to

the students for whom they are responsible by providing a quality education.”

It is a pleasure for me to assign my signature.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the residents of Centre Hastings are facing an immediate and critical situation in accessing physician services; and

“Whereas a retiring family physician has been unsuccessful in procuring a replacement physician, potentially leaving 5,000 patients without a doctor; and

“Whereas accessibility to already overcrowded hospital emergency departments and walk-in clinics is limited because of distance and availability to transportation; and

“Whereas Centre Hastings has been designated as an underserviced area in need of five physicians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act immediately to establish a community health centre in Centre Hastings.”

I will affix my signature to this petition.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Harris government’s plan to privatize and deregulate Ontario’s electricity system will lead to higher rates because private owners will sell more power to US customers whose rates are typically 50% higher than Ontario’s; and

“Whereas selling coal plants like Nanticoke to the private sector will lead to more pollution because the private owners will run the plants at full capacity to earn a profit; and

“Whereas electricity deregulation in California has led to sky-high rates and blackouts; and

“Whereas Ontario needs a system of public power that will ensure rate stability, environmental protection and secure access to power;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, call on the government to scrap electricity deregulation and privatization and bring in a system of accountable public power. The first priority for such a public power system must be incentives for energy conservation and green power. Electricity rates and major energy projects must be subject to full public hearings and binding rulings by a public regulator instead of leaving energy rates to private profit.”

This has been signed by a number of people in the Hamilton area. I agree with the petitioners. I have affixed my signature to it.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I'm proud to present a petition from Ledbury school, one of the finest schools in north Toronto.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents and taxpayers of the province of Ontario, are gravely concerned about the present state of financial support for publicly funded schools in the province Ontario,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) We respectfully request that an immediate public review of the current education funding formula for public education in Ontario be conducted with the participation of all stakeholders in the public education system.

"(2) We further respectfully request that until the review is completed, boards are allotted funds equal to the amount spent in the 2001-02 school year, plus funding for inflation and enrolment increases."

I fully support this petition from Ledbury school. I'm more than proud to affix my signature to it.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition that concerns the very grave issue of electricity deregulation in Ontario. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned residents of Toronto, demand that the government immediately stop the process of privatizing our electricity transmission system, the network of steel towers, transformers, wooden poles which transmit power from generation plants to our homes, and further postpone the electricity deregulation process until the Ontario public is given proof that privatization will not result in price increases, and place a moratorium on any further retailing of electricity until the Ontario Energy Board comes up with a standard contract to be used by all retailers; and

"That a standard contract spell out in clear terms that the residential users are waiving their rights to future rebates in exchange for fixed rates over a specified period of time."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm happy to sign my name to it.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I'm proud to join over 200,000 people in Ontario who have petitioned this Legislature as follows:

"Whereas animal abusers are not currently subject to any provincial penalties;

"Whereas it is currently impossible for a judge to ban puppy and kitten mill operators from owning animals for the rest of their lives; and

"Whereas Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals investigators need to act on instances

of cruelty to animals in a more timely fashion, thereby lessening the animals' suffering;

"Whereas it is currently not an offence to train an animal to fight another animal; and

"Whereas Ontario's animals are not adequately protected by the current law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the amendments to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act developed by a governmental working group (which included the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) and submitted to the office of the Solicitor General of Ontario in June of 2001, so that the above conditions, among others, will be properly addressed."

I am more than proud to affix my signature to this petition, along with 200,000 other Ontarians.

EDUCATION REFORM

Mr Ruprecht: This petition goes to the Minister of Education, addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"That we believe that the heart of education in our province is the relationship between student and teacher and that this human and relational dimension should be maintained and extended in any proposed reform.

"As Minister of Education and Training, you should know how strongly we oppose many of these secondary school reform recommendations being proposed by your minister and by your government. We recognize and support the need to review secondary education in Ontario. The proposal for reform as put forward by your ministry, however, is substantially flawed in several key areas:

"(a) reduced instructional time;

"(b) reduction of instruction in English;

"(c) reduction of qualified teaching personnel;

"(d) academic work experience credit not linked to educational curriculum;

"(e) devaluation of formal education.

"We strongly urge this ministry to delay the implementation of secondary school reform so that all interested stakeholders, parents, students, school councils, trustees and teachers are able to participate in a more meaningful, consultative process which will help ensure that a high quality of publicly funded education is provided."

Since I agree with this petition wholeheartedly, I'm happy to sign my name to it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RELIABLE ENERGY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA FIABILITÉ DE L'ÉNERGIE ET LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 5, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant certaines lois en ce qui concerne le secteur de l'énergie.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate? In rotation, I'd like to recognize the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): This bill is all about the privatization of Ontario Hydro as we knew it, as Ontarians have built it with their sacrifice, with their hard work, with their commitment, with their investment over the course of decades and generations, people like our parents and our grandparents, people like generations of new Canadians, immigrants to this province and to this country, who understood the value of public ownership of certain assets, who understood that there are certain things—in this case hydroelectric power, electricity—that are so important to the health and safety of communities, to the health and safety of families and to our industrial growth and maintenance that it is not in our interests, it's contrary to our interests, to have electricity controlled by for-profit corporations whose primary goal is not the provision of electricity—never mind the provision of electricity at cost, which has been the mandate of Ontario Hydro in this province since its inception.

Private, corporate, for-profit sectors, inevitably non-Canadian, US and beyond, whose primary purpose and motivation and goal is profit, and the people be damned—New Democrats have been and remain consistently and adamantly opposed to the privatization of hydroelectricity in Ontario. We're opposed to it; we've always been. New Democrats have led the fight in this province to keep Ontario's hydroelectricity public—publicly owned and under public control. We will continue to fight that fight, arm in arm with the vast majority of Ontarians, arm in arm with trade unionists and their leadership, arm in arm, quite frankly, as well with no small number of private sector entrepreneurs, industrialists, who understand in a way the other parties in this Legislature don't that publicly owned, publicly controlled, at-cost electricity is vital for the maintenance of the industrial jobs in this province, for their preservation as well as for industrial growth.

Nowhere is that more acutely apparent than down where I come from, where the heavy industry, the value-

added manufacturing jobs, the good jobs—oh, women and men have had to work hard at those jobs for a long time, throughout the history of that kind of work, whether it's in steel mills or in pulp and paper mills or in pipe mills or in foundries or in forges or in abrasives factories like Exxon and Washington Mills—the latter down in Niagara Falls, the former in Thorold.

These are high electricity users. These are places that operate arc furnaces. These are places for whom the cost of electricity and maintaining the lowest possible cost of electricity is crucial to their ongoing presence of manufacturing sites in Ontario and specifically in Niagara region. The paper mill in Thorold is a high electricity consumer, and it goes well beyond that. It goes well into the rural parts of Niagara and Ontario and into the agricultural industry. Chicken farmers—and you, Speaker, are familiar with those types of operations—rely upon a steady, reliable and as economical as possible a source of electricity. The whole new growing industry in Niagara, the industry around the cultivation of flowers and green-housing, relies upon a steady, stable and as economical as possible a source of electricity.

This debate is critical and the direction of this government is disastrous. This government clearly is beholden, not to the people of Ontario—there are no two ways about that—but to its corporate friends, to its Bay Street buddies, and it has met the demands upon it by those same corporate friends and Bay Street buddies.

This government is in the process of preparing the privatization of not only Hydro One, the transmission lines of this province that ensure that electricity is delivered to the darkest and farthest corner, but as well the privatization of every generating station, and they're joined by their friends the Liberals in that regard. This is not just an insult to the people of this province; this is an outright betrayal of the people of this province. Ontario Hydro is one of those trusts.

Did this government go to the people of Ontario in the election in 1999 and suggest that that election was all about giving this government, the Conservative Party of Ontario, Mike Harris and then Ernie Eves, the power, the authority, the mandate to sell off that public asset? Far from it. Indeed, the government tried to hide its light under a bushel, and in terms of what the electors of this province expected and what was the subject matter of debate during the last election, the sell-off of the public ownership of Ontario Hydro has been one of the cruellest hoaxes and surprises imposed upon the people of this province.

Clearly, this government has no mandate to pursue its agenda of the privatization of Ontario Hydro, be it Hydro One or the generating sector. Clearly, that has never been the subject matter of an election debate. One of the things that Howard Hampton and New Democrats have been saying during the course of our fight to keep Ontario's electrical generation and transmission system public, one of the things that Howard Hampton has been saying clearly, is, "Let's have an election."

If Ernie Eves and his Minister of Energy and his cabinet and his backbenchers really think the people of Ontario want to sell off one of their most prized public assets at bargain basement prices, then let's have an election. Call an election and let that be the subject matter of the debate during the course of that election.

Now we have the government trying to restrict the extent of debate over the issue right here in this Legislature. This government wants out of here so bad on June 28, they can taste it; they can. They're just squirming in their seats. There are little puddles forming out of the excitement of these people wanting to get out of here by June 28. They are so anxious. There isn't a snowball's chance in Hades of this government sitting beyond June 28. To get out of here in three weeks' time, as they want, they're going to ram through this legislation and try to ram through as many other pieces of legislation that fulfill commitments they've made to their special interest friends. They're going to try to ram through as much as possible.

1520

Oh, there's a lot of talk about public hearings. Public hearings, my foot. Do you know what this government's got in mind for public hearings? A couple of days here and a couple of days there and maybe one day here at Queen's Park. This government, the Conservatives at Queen's Park, haven't got the slightest intention of sending this bill out to committee for any meaningful debate. Meaningful debate at the committee level would mean that this bill went out during the course of the summer so that every citizen of this province would have an opportunity to express their view on this government's sell-off of Ontario's publicly owned, publicly controlled hydroelectric system.

I tell you, the people of this province want to have a say about it. They've got things to say about it. But this government has no interest in hearing from them. This government doesn't want to hear from you folks, it doesn't want to hear from you folks, it just wants to ram this legislation through this assembly and then skedaddle so they can hide out, turn turtle, duck, take cover from the flak.

You've got Tory backbenchers going back to their ridings. Some of them, I suspect, aren't even going back to their ridings any more on the weekends because they come back pummelled and bruised. They report during their caucus meetings, "You won't believe what people are telling me about our agenda at Queen's Park, our agenda, the Tory agenda, the Conservative agenda, the Ernie Eves agenda to sell off Ontario Hydro"—the public, the people are approaching Tory backbenchers in supermarkets, in gas stations, wherever it is that Tory backbenchers have the courage any more to venture out to, telling them, "Don't sell off Ontario Hydro." Tory backbenchers are coming back to their caucus meetings bruised and pummelled and they're saying, "Oh, we can't do this. This is a serious political mistake. The people of Ontario don't want us to sell off Ontario Hydro. It's the

jewel in our crown of publicly owned assets in this province."

But the government's going to forge ahead, regardless, nonetheless, anyway. It is a tragic, tragic course of events, because you see, we know what the consequences are going to be from the sell-off of Hydro One. The sell-off of Hydro One, the introduction of profit—and don't for a moment buy into the line—what a cockamamie line—about how the private sector—let's talk about the private sector—can do it more efficiently, it can do it cheaper. What, like the board of directors that you guys appointed? All Tory chums, hand-picked Tory buddies for the board of directors of Hydro One, with their private sector kind of salaries: \$2 million, \$2.1 million, \$2.3 million. That's just the annual income.

One hundred and seventy-six thousand dollars a year for a car allowance. I've got a 1994 Chevy S-10 out there that runs real good that I can let you have for around four and a half grand, Mr Baird. One hundred and seventy-six thousand dollars for a car allowance? What kind of car are you talking about? It sure as heck ain't one made in North America. Good grief. What is the president of Hydro One doing driving around in a Rolls-Royce or a Bentley or some kind of high-priced, sophisticated, elite British-made sports car like an Aston Martin or an Italian Maserati? What in God's name does Ms Clitheroe need with that kind of car? Wouldn't a Chevy Impala suffice? Or maybe let's go all out and buy her a \$40,000 Buick Park Avenue.

But \$176,000? There's a stench around that. It's the stench of a company's collusion and corruption. Half a million a year? How much was it a year to sponsor a racing yacht with "Hydro One" imprinted on the side? I've got folks down in Niagara who work real hard to take out their little 10-horsepower Evinrude on a 14-foot wooden boat on the weekend on to Lake Erie to try to snag a couple of perch, and yet they've got to pay, through their hydro rates, for Hydro One to be sponsoring some sort of elite, rich-folk kind of racing yacht where the Lalique crystal is preserved in special racks so it doesn't bang around and crack or break, and where the Krug champagne flows readily, because you don't sail around in one of those yachts without the accoutrements. The price of the yacht is just the tip of the iceberg, because when you're paying almost half a million bucks a year, ratepayers, electricity ratepayers—this is the private sector model that these guys worship. You don't run around in a half-million-dollars-a-year sponsored yacht and drink Coca-Cola out of a can. You're drinking Krug champagne out of Lalique glasses, no two ways about it.

We've only seen the tip of the iceberg, and the question that really begs to be asked is, how many of you Tory members have been to sea? How many of you have shared in the incredible generosity of Hydro One, this hand-picked, Tory buddy board of directors, their incredible generosity with the monies of hard-working folks like where I come from?

Let me tell you about where I come from. You know full well where I come from, and down there some of the

lowest-income people live in apartments that were constructed by developers who wanted to keep their costs as low as possible as well. In the course of that construction, what kind of heat did they install in those apartments? Electric heating. You know what I mean: baseboard heating—incredibly low instalment cost, low capital cost but, man, does that tenant get whacked down the road.

I've got senior citizens down in Niagara who have worked hard all of their lives, raised their kids, helped raise their grandkids, paid off their homes, who, because of the natural gas increases since last winter, along with the increased property taxes as a result of this government's downloading, are in fear of losing their homes. When we start to see, come a couple of days of the hot summer months and the increased electricity consumption that accompanies that, the incredible new, high, spiked rates in electricity costs, not only do those senior citizens—hard-working women and men, every single one of them—have to fear natural gas prices, but now they have to fear that electricity bill that's going to come. You see, their incomes haven't changed. They're retired. They're living on fixed incomes, but their hydro bills are going to increase 10%, 20%, 30% and 40%. We know that's going to happen because we know that's what happened in other jurisdictions where electricity transmission and production have been deregulated, privatized and taken over by profit-making corporate and mostly multinational interests. It's the inevitable result.

Not only are some of our lowest-income people, be it our senior citizens—our folks and our grandfolks trying to live out their retirement and dignity on modest incomes—going to get hit, and get hit hard, I'm telling you, to the point of some of those folks having to give up their own homes, which some of them helped build themselves or built entirely by themselves; we're going to see some of the lowest-income people—people living in apartments—especially down where I come from, who are going to find themselves on the cusp of homelessness because of the inevitable increases in electricity costs that are being introduced by this government's adamant but damned agenda of selling off Hydro, every facet of it, to its corporate buddies.

It is imperative that people across this province continue to rally around the fight to keep Ontario's hydroelectricity public. You've heard the Web site www.publicpower.ca talked about in this Legislature. People should log on to that Web site, access it—www.publicpower.ca—and find out what's happening to our publicly owned, publicly controlled hydroelectricity system here in the province of Ontario, and learn about the betrayal of each and every resident of this province by Mr Harris, then Mr Eves and his gang of backbenchers, who are not at all interested in the people of Ontario but who would rather repay the debt that's been created by the incredible financial support they've received from some very interested parties to the privatization of hydroelectricity.

1530

Since they were elected the government in 1995, this party, the Conservative Party of Ontario, has gotten almost 30 grand from Direct Energy alone—\$30,000. On June 4 the Minister of Energy, Mr Stockwell, said on CBC radio, "I know we got \$7,500 from Hydro One. But trust me, \$7,500 isn't enough to buy this government." So I asked him earlier today, "If \$7,500 isn't enough, how much is?" Did Direct Energy meet the test? They gave you 30 grand. I think they did, because you've accommodated Direct Energy in their door-to-door rip-offs from day one.

What about Enron? They hope to make a mint in the privatization of Hydro in Ontario. They were one of the chief consultants for this government. One of the partners was Enron. The Conservative Party was doing fine by them too, almost 16 grand.

It's clear that we're opposing this legislation. But it's not just about opposing it today; it's about fighting it through the balance of this month and making sure this bill doesn't pass.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I listened with great interest to the speech by the member for Niagara Centre, and I was surprised he didn't quote one of our colleagues in the Legislature. When asked in a discussion in the Legislature about privatization whether he thought we should privatize, he said, "I think we should."

"Do you support privatization?"

"I think we should."

When people suggested he had said "I think we should," he said he didn't, that it was misquoted. That was the Leader of the Opposition, Mr McGuinty, talking about proceeding with privatization on December 12: "I think we should." And now he's against it, because he's changed his mind again.

He had the nerve to come in here—and I was surprised the member for Niagara Centre didn't mention this in his speech—and call our leader and our Premier the king of flip-flops when on a fundamental issue like that he changed his mind again; he didn't give it enough thought. I still don't think he's given it enough thought. Maybe we can tune in for the second reading vote or the third reading vote or next year or next time we're debating Hydro. Maybe he'll change his mind again.

I was surprised that the member for Niagara Centre, when talking about his Web page, didn't say—I plugged into his Ontariopower.com Web site last night—

Mr Kormos: Publicpower.

Hon Mr Baird: Whatever. I punched it in, and whose face popped up on the screen? It was a virus. All of a sudden this creeping face of Howard Hampton came up when I punched that in. It gave my computer a virus, which we're still trying to fix.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I should respond to the minister, the member for Nepean-Carleton. It's interesting that Mr Eves said, "We're proceeding with the privatization." Then he was about to

lose the by-election in Orangeville, and the day before, a big headline, "Sale of Hydro off the Table." Then he comes back here and all of a sudden he's got this legislation. It's back on the table. I think we have to ask the member from Nepean-Carleton where his Premier is, where the last Premier was and where he will be tomorrow.

Just getting back to my colleague from Niagara Centre, the one thing that he mentioned about ordinary people—and I know the most disgusting thing that I've ever seen came across my desk yesterday. I had a widow, a pensioner, who had to fax me a copy of her husband's death certificate to try to prove that one of these door-to-door hustlers this government allowed to rip off people for the last four years on gas and electricity forged her dead husband's signature on a contract. The only way she can get out of it is she had to fax me her husband's death certificate. The poor gentleman passed away in 1995.

That is what this government has created. They purposely put forth these door-to-door hucksters. They forced them upon innocent people across Ontario. Now they pretend they're going to try to do something, but for the last three years they promoted these door-to-door con artists, allowed them to rip off people, selling natural gas, selling electricity door-to-door and signing false contracts. There is even a church in Toronto where they forged the signature of the priest, at St Stanislaus church. This government condoned it, allowed it and now is pretending to pay attention.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I'm rising to respond to some of the outrageous comments from both honourable members from both parties.

First of all, to the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, come on, this legislation has strong consumer protection sections in it. This legislation protects consumers from that kind of activity it's said we condoned, which we spoke against and took steps to fix, so it's just absolutely objectionable, unreasonable and just not accurate, what the member for Eglinton-Lawrence says.

Now we come to our favourite member, the member for Niagara Centre, who is concerned about selling off, he says, Hydro One. I appreciate the comments and concerns we've heard from the public, which the Premier has said are going to be guiding his future decisions on the disposition of Hydro One, but let's take a look at a success story in the electricity system where this government recognized the old Ontario Hydro's management of plants like Bruce was not working. We had a decrepit plant that was not going anywhere. We had members of the community and members of the union petitioning the member for Niagara Centre's government, saying, "Please help us. We're losing the plant, we're losing jobs and it's damaging our community."

What was the NDP government's response? They shut it down. What we did was find a private sector organization with experience and the expertise that not only has the plant up and running again, but might actually get Bruce A restarted, the units Ontario Hydro couldn't put in. They're putting in new investment. We have 1,000

jobs saved; we have 260 more new jobs; young people with opportunities to apprentice, 50 new every year. We have \$15 million of economic activity in that community every year because of the decisions this government made—

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I appreciate the comments of the member for Niagara Centre. Talking about the board, the board of Ontario Hydro was doing exactly what the government wanted them to do. They were following instructions from the government. It was only when the government got caught that they finally admitted they made a huge mistake and are now trying to make the board the scapegoat. The board should be gone but the government has to be held accountable.

I will use the evidence. Every single one of those board members was hand-picked by the government when Mr Eves was Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance. The board was given direction and instructions from the government. Mr Wilson, when he was Minister of Energy, tells us he met on a regular basis with these people. They are professional board members. They would have kept the shareholder directly and totally involved. To say anything other than that frankly is not credible.

The additional piece of evidence: on May 15, Mr Eves, the Premier, was asked, "Is the \$6 million appropriate?" for Ms Clitheroe. He referred it to Mr Stockwell who never commented on it on May 15. He refused to answer it. He then makes up a story that as soon as he was briefed on it, he was outraged. Frankly, that is not credible. If he was outraged about it, the day he was asked in the Legislature, he would have responded saying that he was outraged. He said that he was so outraged that he was going to do something about it. We have no evidence at all—none, zero—that he did anything until last week.

1540

We have asked for letters that the government sent to the board. Mr Wilson has now said that he tried to get the board to change, but every time he raised it, they would simply increase it. I want evidence that Mr Wilson, on behalf of the shareholders, sent the board a letter and told them it was unacceptable, but we have yet to see any evidence of that. What the government is saying is not credible.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Niagara Centre has two minutes to respond.

Mr Kormos: Two minutes to respond: I want to tell you about the real stinker in this whole scam and that is the debt. You see, if I own a company and I own the shares in that company and I want to sell that company by virtue of selling the shares, a buyer buys the shares and they acquire that company, lock, stock and barrel. They acquire its capital, they acquire its assets, they acquire its accounts receivable and they acquire its accounts payable.

But understand very clearly that the ratepayer is still going to be on the hook after the sell-off of Hydro. The ratepayers—you folks—are still going to be called upon to pay off every single penny of the Hydro debt. It's like buying a house, getting a mortgage and then having your house confiscated by the government so that somebody else can live in it, but you've still got to pay the mortgage. Every single penny of that debt is going to be paid for by ratepayers, but the assets of Hydro, the generating capacity of Hydro, the transmission lines, are going to be sold off so that private companies, inevitably US or European-based, can make profits on the backs of Ontarians: hard-working women and men, retirees, young families, people losing jobs because industries will move away rather than pay the higher electricity rates.

It's not the kind of Ontario that the people in Niagara Centre, where I come from, built, nor is it the kind of Ontario they want their children to live in.

This bill should be defeated. Half a dozen Tory backbenchers with courage, half a dozen Tory backbenchers with a little bit of guts would make a difference. Where are you?

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Hon Mr Baird: I have courage and guts to take difficult stands on issues.

I'm pleased to share my time—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: We can't have conversations between Scarborough and the corner of Eglinton and Lawrence. We can't have conversations between Uxbridge and Whitby and Niagara Falls. If you were doing that at any other time, you'd use a telephone. So if you're going to do it, you're going to do it with a telephone now; you're not going to do it in here. Am I clear?

The Chair recognizes the chief government whip.

Hon Mr Baird: I'd like to share my time with the hard-working member for Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop.

It's my purpose this afternoon to speak a bit about the important bill we're dealing with, the Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act, and the environmental amendments that are part of it, which I think are quite important. The environment is a big issue, a growing concern to people in my constituency. In my community of Nepean-Carleton, I hear that regularly and I want to talk about some of the parts of this bill that deal with that.

The bill we're discussing has some proposed amendments to the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act, which is not administered by the Ministry of Energy; in fact, it's administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Ontarians want to receive their electricity from sources that don't damage their natural environment. We heard this back in the hearings on Bill 35. My constituents have spoken to me about this issue a good amount.

We could take methane, for example, off the Trail Road landfill site and that would be enough to provide electricity to all of Bells Corners, some 12,000 people. But until we opened up the grid to competition, that

would have been illegal. So instead of harnessing that power for a good purpose that would be environmentally friendly, we banned it. We outlawed it and said, "You have to use the monopoly of Ontario Hydro." The opening of the market on May 1 certainly does help with that, as do the amendments contained in this legislation.

My constituents are passionate about it and they want government to do something about it. This has been an issue for many years, and I mentioned that one specific example. In fact, it would have been cheaper for a big employer in my constituency like Northern Telecom to just simply get a slab of concrete and a turbine generator with natural gas and generate the electricity on their own rather than buy it from the monopolistic monster that was Ontario Hydro before it was broken up.

The one thing that our government has done is to bring a new concept to our electricity market. The concept is competition. It's competition that will lead suppliers to provide the innovations in clean power that the people of Ontario and people in my community want. Another is to introduce proposed amendments to the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act. Briefly, this act provides for the use of the water of lakes and rivers and regulates improvements in them such as certain types of construction. It regulates the safe design, construction, repair and operation of dams, the maintenance of water levels and the use of waterworks.

No matter where we live, we all depend on water. We need it to generate electricity. That's particularly the case in Niagara region, where my colleague who just spoke is from. We need it to irrigate crops; we need it to sustain our economy. Indeed, we need water for our daily lives. This is why the government has introduced these amendments, to ensure that our water is used responsibly and for the benefit of all Ontarians. These amendments are intended to ensure that water power producers manage water levels and flows responsibly, especially during seasonal periods of peak electricity prices, that they provide certainty and a level playing field for the water power industry, that they establish clear industry compliance provisions and provide all water users with assurances of full participation in how water resources will be managed and how any environmental, social and economic impacts will be addressed. For example, it would ensure that recreational users, cottagers and commercial interests are not adversely affected.

The amendments that we're discussing in Bill 58 contain provisions for water power producers to prepare water management plans, providing full, open and clear opportunities for stakeholder participation and consultation. Once approved by MNR, industry would then manage and operate facilities in accordance with the approved plan. While formal water management plans are being developed, the ministry will work with producers to ensure that water levels and flows continue to be managed appropriately. Where existing operations are well documented, the ministry will adopt these operating plans as interim water management plans until formal plans can be completed.

In other situations, the ministry will work with operators to develop interim plans. Interim plans will be enforceable under the act and subject to the penalty provisions of the act. So enforcement is important. Penalty provisions will be both monetary and non-monetary. The proposed penalties would match the highest in other provinces with comparable legal systems and remedies. Ontarians will not tolerate and should not have to suffer the consequences of those people who, whether for commercial or private or personal needs, want to abuse our environment. The amendments contained in the bill we're discussing today send a very loud and clear signal to potential backsliders that we will not tolerate the abuse of our most precious resource—our water.

This bill we're debating is important to the environment. Ontarians have made it clear that they want to receive their electrical power in a manner that ensures that their environment is not damaged. If passed, the proposed Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act would give the government more ability to protect the environment. I think we can do more and that's why the legislation contains some provisions on that.

This has been a long debate. I sat on the legislative committee that dealt with Bill 35 and did a lot of consultations and travelled around the province. Bill 35 broke up the old Ontario Hydro and opened up the market. It actually got support from the official opposition on second reading in principle but they did not see fit to support it in third reading. They changed their minds. This is sort of like Dalton McGuinty. On December 12, Dalton McGuinty, when asked about privatization, said, "I think we should." Someone said, "Could you put that in context?" which I'm happy to do. He said, "I said there's some speculation that rates are going to go up, and do you know what? Rates may very well have to go up. We've been getting a bit of a free ride here in terms of the debt Ontario Hydro has amassed, but if we're going to move forward with privatization, as I think we should, let's bring it into the House or bring it into committee."

1550

It's funny. Mr McGuinty says we should go forward with privatization and bring legislation into the House to do that. The legislation we're debating before us today deals with, in some respects, just establishing property rights for the disposition of property, if that was the decision that was taken.

I have no beef with the argument that the government should take a period of time to consult, to look at other options and to have the courage to listen to the people of the province of Ontario. You bet your boots people are concerned about this issue, as we all should be concerned about this important issue.

The reality is, the opening of the marketplace on May 1, concurrent with the IPO at that time, in April before the court decision, did make it confusing for some people who didn't see the difference between the opening of the market and the IPO that was discussed. That's why the new Minister of Energy, the new Premier, the new

government of the province of Ontario, are taking a reasonable period of time to look at the alternatives that could be debated. But I think it's important that we look at what happened with Bruce, where a private operator was brought in to operate that government resource. They really turned it around, and I'll tell you, the economy in Bruce was facing some huge economic challenges when it came to the former Ontario Hydro facility at Bruce. I think that experience has been good. I think the Provincial Auditor had some comments to that effect, as we heard in the Legislature at the standing committee on public accounts earlier today.

When you look at the mess that was Ontario Hydro, with the gigantic debt that was racked up by governments of all political persuasion, you know what? No government should be proud of its work, whether it's a Tory government, a Liberal government or a New Democratic government that presided over the former Ontario Hydro. It needs to be cleaned up; it needs to be changed. We should have the courage to tackle that issue, not with a Band-Aid but with some substantive changes.

I think opening up the market and competition will be good. I can remember the naysayers when the CRTC opened up long distance services. What has happened? Rates have gone down consistently. There's a whole new set of plans and services that are available that simply weren't there. Would anyone suggest we go back to the old monopoly of Bell Canada with respect to long distance services? I don't know a single soul in the province of Ontario who would argue that. I think it's important that we move forward, have a period of time where the government and the Premier and the Minister of the Environment and the cabinet can look at this issue. I think it is important to establish property rights such as the disposition, or whether it's an income trust, or whether it's any number of other models, whether it's an IPO; you name it. That's what the legislation that we're doing does.

It also contains, as I said, some important environmental protections which I think are in order, as well as some further consumer protection initiatives, some of which—not all of which—were debated by our colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin this morning. I support protections for the consumer, but I thought the member's resolution this morning went too far. He thinks it's OK for him to go door to door, but doesn't want anyone else to be able to go door to door and talk about a particular issue and a free marketplace. I think free markets are the way to go.

So I will be voting in favour of Bill 58, and look forward to the speech by my friend the member for Simcoe North, who I know has a barnburner in store for all of us.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): It's a pleasure to rise today and speak a little bit on Bill 58, the proposed Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act, 2002. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Energy for the work he's done on this bill. It's a very important issue for all of us in this House. I know this

debate will continue on and we will come up with a good solution when it's all said and done.

The restructuring of the electricity sector has provided consumers and Ontario with a historic opportunity to choose how they receive their electricity. They can now choose to go with fixed rate contracts offered by retailers or to stay with the fluctuating market rates offered by their local utilities. They can do this because the government opened the electricity market to competition on May 1 of this year.

As you know, this followed a long, long process dating back to the Common Sense Revolution, and all the consultations that took place, the Macdonald commission and the report on the white paper, leading up the Electricity Act, passed in this House in 1998, which pointed out that we would open the market some time around May 1, 2002. At least as importantly, they can also choose how they receive their electricity from clean, environmentally friendly sources. I'd like to speak a little bit on some of the environmentally friendly sources of electricity.

Some in this House have argued that Ontario should revert to publicly owned power to promote green power. They seem to believe that if we just go back to the old days of Ontario Hydro, and we've certainly heard that from the New Democratic Party, green power would somehow miraculously appear. Ontario has had public power for nearly 100 years, but somehow that miracle never quite happened. Public power didn't provide a significant portfolio of green power. It failed to devote the necessary effort to explore cleaner sources of energy because it lacked sufficient incentive to do so. It lacked incentive because it was not subject to competition. Thanks to the restructuring of Ontario's electricity sector, it now is.

Competition is Ontario's best guarantee of a cleaner electricity sector. Ontarians want to protect the environment. They know that clean energy will go a long way toward achieving that objective and they continue to express their growing demand for cleaner, affordable sources of energy. Where there is demand, you can be sure that supply will follow. Only since the Energy Competition Act was passed have consumers been given a say about how electricity is generated in Ontario, and because customers now have choice, we are beginning to see green power initiatives. In the long run, it will be competition that will encourage further innovation and the development of cleaner technologies.

Competition will provide the incentive for more environmentally friendly power sources like the windmill. The largest windmill in the world in fact is constructed near Pickering. Competition has enabled the Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative to build on a lakeshore a windmill large enough to power 500 homes, and competition has resulted in Bruce Power and Ontario Power Generation building the province's first windmill on the Bruce Peninsula. It's actually a windmill farm.

Many other environmentally friendly electricity generating ideas are being pursued in towns and cities around

the province. We heard Mr Baird talk earlier about methane gas, but I am also interested in wave power. I know that wave power in our Great Lakes system, as it is in the ocean systems in some places across the world, has some real opportunities, right here in Ontario, having the Great Lakes that we have.

The Energy Competition Act made these projects possible. Before that, the only two electrons that flowed on the electricity grid were those allowed by Ontario Hydro. Now, anyone whose generating system meets the safety and reliability standards of the IMO can have access to the grid to sell clean electricity to their customers.

Competition allows smaller, cleaner generating plants to be built closer to where electricity is needed. Our government was able to order the Lakeview station to cease burning coal by April 2005 because we are confident that investors will fill that demand, and our confidence is being rewarded. Private companies have already proposed more than \$3 billion worth of new generating projects, most of them powered by clean natural gas. The Sithe plants at Goreway and Southdown in Brampton and Mississauga are well advanced in planning and in approvals, and the TransAlta plant in Sarnia is under construction and well on the way to competition and will soon be operational.

When private money finances the electricity sector, governments are free to use tax dollars to pay for priority programs like health care and education that we hear so much demand for not only across our province but across our country as well.

Clearly, the government recognizes the value of competition, but we also recognize the need for strong regulation. That is why we developed policies to reduce emissions from the energy sector and, last fall, announced stringent caps on nitrogen oxide and sulphur dioxide emissions from electricity generation. These new caps began to take effect in January this year. By the time they are fully implemented in 2007, they will cut smog and acid rain causing emissions of nitrogen oxides from fossil plants by 53% of actual emissions in 2000. Sulphur dioxide emissions will be down by 25%. Ontario Power Generation has already begun to meet these new targets with an investment of \$250 million for selective catalytic reduction technology, which will reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by 80% in four of the fossil units.

1600

This is all good news for the environment and for the consumer. But consumers need a way of knowing where the electricity comes from. That's why the proposed Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act includes amendments to enable the government to establish an environmental information tracking and reporting system, which would allow consumers to make informed choices about electricity offerings. The tracking system would be an essential part of the government's environmental labelling program.

The purpose of this program is to provide consumers with objective, easy-to-understand information to help

them make choices in a competitive electricity market; encourage development of an environmentally preferable electricity market in Ontario; and ensure that consumers can be confident in the variety of marketing claims of environmentally preferable electricity products. Competition is providing choice that was simply not available under the old monopoly. The proposed act would give Ontarians even more ability to choose environmentally friendly sources of power.

I just wanted to say a couple of words on the opening of the market and talk for a few moments about the largest utility in my area, Orillia Power, which has done an amazing job over the last three or four years as we've worked toward opening the market. I'd like to congratulate John Mattinson and his board of directors for the work they've done.

They've also worked very well with the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in a cogeneration plant they have with the hospital. They take advantage of all the prime times to save as much power as they can in the operation of that hospital, which I might point out to the Minister of Health, who is in attendance here today, is, I think, one of the most efficient hospitals in Ontario. I always like to comment on that when I'm making comments about Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): You're absolutely right.

Mr Dunlop: I thank you for saying that, and I'm still lobbying very strongly for our proposed redevelopment that's planned to go ahead later on this fall. I know you've been very supportive in the operating plan you've proposed to us.

Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to take part in this debate today. I hope to hear a lot more comments from both of the opposition parties as we debate Bill 58, and hope everyone in this House will see fit to pass this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Colle: I want to thank the member from Simcoe North and the member from Nepean-Carleton.

I guess the name of this act, Bill 58, should be, "We don't really give a damn what Judge Gans or the courts say; we're going to do whatever we want anyway." As you know, Mr Speaker, Judge Gans was brave enough to basically say that what the government was doing in privatizing Ontario Hydro is illegal. But that did not stop this government from proceeding, and they've even drafted an act which basically contravenes what's before the courts and in fact is up to appeal. This government doesn't care if it's before the courts or not; it's going to ram through this legislation and overrule the courts in this province, which is what Bill 58 is all about.

Bill 58 is also about still failing to protect consumers in this province from these door-to-door scam artists who have essentially been let loose on the people of Ontario by this government over the last three years. Thousands of these locusts have been going from door to door ripping off seniors; signing them to gas contracts, electricity contracts; intimidating people; lying to them. In

fact the worst lie of all was perpetrated by this government's own company, Onsource, which went door-to-door and said, "Sign with Ontario's company; 100 years of history." Over 190,000 Ontarians innocently signed with Onsource. But do you know what this Ontario company did, the company of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves? The day before the markets opened on May 1, their company sold 190,000 Ontarians down the drain to a company in Alberta they didn't know about. This bill does not stop and still allows false advertising for the companies this government is in cahoots with, to flip contracts on the eve of anything; still allows it.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Talk about revisionist history. I can't believe some of the things I'm hearing from the members who were speaking about the terrible things that led them to privatize hydro. None of it is true. Yes, we had a debt, which was created under the Tories and the Liberals when decisions were made to build more nuclear plants. Nuclear plants are very, very expensive to build, and people knew at the time that there would be huge deficits but they could be dealt with as they had been dealt with: through the rates. That's why there is such huge debt, not because of severe mismanagement. It was known at the time that nuclear plants' cost overruns—and I want to tell you, although I wasn't here, that New Democrats who were here at the time—Gerry, you would remember this; I think you were here, or were you?—objected to the building of Darlington, expressed concerns about the costs that would be incurred in building that, and it went way over cost.

That is the reality of what happened. Because of, as one of the members said, mismanagement by all three governments—this is now being used as an excuse to have to privatize Hydro One and our generation, when the people of Ontario have made it very clear that they don't want this asset privatized.

Furthermore, the members talk about how privatizing hydro, both transmission and generation, will improve the environment. We've had Greenpeace and other major environmental groups come out and say, in fact, that privatizing hydro is going to make the environment worse. There is nothing in the bill to date that actually enhances the ability for green energy to come on stream and, secondly, the coal-fired plants will now be burning seven days a week, 24 hours a day, spewing out coal so they can sell to the Americans for big profits.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I heard the member from Simcoe North congratulate the energy minister on the occasion of this bill. Let's be clear: this bill is a major embarrassment for this government. The blank-cheque bill has been brought in for two reasons: firstly, they lost a case before Mr Justice Gans and found out—this is the law of Ontario right now—that in fact they have no statutory authority to sell Hydro One. They have no statutory authority to do what they tried to do. It would have been an illegal sale had they proceeded with it. And they're not going to go before the courts and let the courts decide like every other time they have a matter before the courts. They let the matter go through the

courts, whether it be the Ontario Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court of Canada, and then the Legislature responds, if need be. No, no, they're not going to wait for that. They want to get this blank-cheque bill passed quickly so they can do whatever they want this summer in cabinet—not in the Legislature, but in cabinet—and thereby not have it accountable. It's an embarrassment; it's no occasion for congratulations.

Secondly, the second part of this bill is about consumer protection. Surely, we should have had protection for the consumers before the unscrupulous retailers showed up for the door-to-door sales tactics, not after. After literally thousands of Ontarians have been ripped off by some unscrupulous—and I'm not saying every single one, but there are thousands of contracts that are questionable.

So this bill is no occasion for congratulations to the energy minister. I don't know if he deserves congratulations for whipping the blank-cheque bill through in record speed. I don't know. We'll have to see whether the government is going to provide the weeks of hearings that were promised by the Premier of Ontario during question period, but I can tell you that the government should not be patting itself on the back for this particular bill.

1610

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It's interesting to me that the member opposite from St Paul's who just spoke believes government shouldn't make laws and rules in the province of Ontario, or I guess in the country of Canada, but that only judges should be able to do that. The decision he referred to of Justice Gans: Justice Gans basically said he didn't think that under the existing statutes we had clear authority to dispose of certain assets, in this case, Hydro One. The government, the members opposite—in both parties—and pretty much everybody in Ontario assumed we did indeed have that ability to dispose of assets we own. People had assumed that was the case for years and years. Everyone, including everyone in this House and the parties opposite, was all surprised at that decision. As I said, the decision was that it wasn't clear in legislation that we had that authority.

Part of this bill, because it is a more expansive bill than just dealing with that authority, clarifies that, through a duly elected government of the people of Ontario, we do indeed have the authority to dispose of and otherwise treat our assets, in this case, Hydro One.

I think it should be clear that the member opposite, by standing up and stating that we shouldn't have this legislation because Justice Gans said we shouldn't sell Hydro One or we don't have the authority to sell Hydro One, is abdicating the government authority we've had in this country for 100 years and more to judges, and we oppose that concept.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Simcoe North has two minutes to respond.

Mr Dunlop: I'd like to thank the members from Eglinton-Lawrence, Toronto-Danforth, St Paul's and my

colleague from Niagara for their comments on the earlier debate by Mr Baird and myself.

I'd like, first of all, to in a way congratulate the New Democratic Party. We've known in this House, in the three years I've been here, exactly where that party has stood on opening the market for competition. We know where they stand on competition and the sale or privatization, whatever you want to call it. They've been fairly clear on that. Mr Hampton repeatedly questioned Minister Wilson on a number of occasions in this House, and we're very satisfied where their stand is: they're against everything.

Meanwhile, over the last three years, since I've been here—by the way, before I got here, in 1996, 1997 and 1998 I was involved in a lot of meetings on opening the market, particularly Bill 35 and the Energy Competition Act. Mr Wilson had consultations throughout this province, and electrical associations from around the province and municipalities were involved in many of those meetings.

The Liberal Party, though, has been so silent on the opening of the market. They obviously agree with that; they agreed with the market opening on May 1, and we've got all kinds of quotes over the last two or three years saying that. But when it comes to the privatization, we have no idea where they stand. They flip-flop all over the place, as Mr McGuinty did on December 12. The fact of the matter is—

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): How many positions have you had on Hydro One in the last week?

Mr Dunlop: Here we have the member from wher- ever chirping away again.

The fact of the matter is, that party has continually flip-flopped all over the place on this issue. Here we are—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, come to order.

Mr Dunlop: I appreciated the opportunity to take part in the debate today.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Phillips: I'm pleased to continue the debate on Bill 58, a bill that will allow the government essentially to do whatever they want with Hydro One. I'll get into some details on it, but I think it's unfortunate the government doesn't have the courage to say, "Here's what we want to do with Hydro One and we will bring a bill before the Legislature that will permit us to do it." Instead, what they're doing with this bill is essentially cutting the public out of this issue. They're saying, "We are going to pass legislation that will allow us to do whatever we want and the Legislature will have no opportunity to debate that."

If you want to know why the public are getting increasingly cynical about politics and politicians, it's for that reason.

I'm sorry, Mr Speaker, I should also say I'm going to be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan-King-Aurora. I should have said that earlier.

I suspect most of the government members, before they got elected, would never have supported something like this. If any of the members of the government had ever thought when they were coming down here that they were going to essentially shut the public out, I suspect many wouldn't have run. So I find it wrong that the government is asking, demanding, forcing the Legislature to give them essentially a blank cheque.

My comments today are going to be focused on Hydro One and, frankly, the damage it has done to the reputation of the province of Ontario and, dare I say, to Mr Eves and the government, starting with this—by the way, I think all Ontario realizes this is our major asset. This is one of the jewels in Ontario. This is a hugely important asset for Ontario. This affects every single person in Ontario. Few assets are more important. But the government couldn't even get the legislation right to give itself the authority to sell it. We are now in an international arena. We're the laughingstock of the financial community in North America. It's the largest asset the government and Mr Eves, the big business person, were going to sell off and the government couldn't even get it right to give itself the legal authority. The courts threw it out.

I come now to the issue that's dominated the discussion around Hydro One over the last few days and that is the board of Hydro One and the government's relationship to it. I make this charge: I believe the government knew every single thing that was going on at Hydro One. I believe the board kept the government totally involved every step of the way. I believe the government knew exactly, every step of the way, the things that were going on and the government only decided to act to fire the board when they got caught. The board was doing exactly what the government wanted them to do.

The evidence of that is this: first, every single board member was hand-picked by the government. Mr Eves at the time was Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance, the person who purportedly had his hands on the controls of the government. He bragged that every week he met with Mr Harris and nothing happened without his approval. They hand-picked every single member. I can only assume that the government gave them clear direction on what was supposed to happen at Hydro One and got agreement from the board that they would do it. This isn't some rogue group of people appointed by some other government. Mr Eves's hands are all over this.

Second, the former Minister of Energy, Mr Wilson, has told us publicly that he met on a regular basis—in fact, he bragged about it—with the chairman of OPG. He said, "I had a set time every week when I'd meet with them." Mr Wilson would brag that he could influence the board, get them to do things. Nothing happened without Mr Wilson being aware of it.

Then, when the controversy hit in the last few days, suddenly, instead of being the person who was in charge of that board, providing direction, managing it, proudly saying he was in charge of it, Mr Wilson said, "Well, every time I mentioned these abhorrent"—and that's his word—"salaries, they'd simply increase them some more." Now, what are we to believe there? If in fact the board of Hydro One—and this, by the way, Mr Wilson said, was taking place 24 months ago and 18 months ago. If we're to believe that—in other words, that Mr Wilson, representing all of the taxpayers out there, on our behalf, representing the shareholders, is finding the board acting in an abhorrent fashion—wouldn't any reasonable person expect on our behalf that there would be a letter to the board from Mr Wilson, Minister of Energy, and perhaps the Deputy Premier at the time, Mr Eves, saying, "Listen, this is unacceptable. We are ordering you to stop it"? Wouldn't there be some minutes of Mr Wilson meeting with the board and saying on behalf of the shareholders, "I'm going to order you to do it"? There isn't any of that. Why? Why isn't there? We asked the question today of the Minister of Energy and he of course, in a serious matter such as this, is more likely to just bluster and say things that in my opinion have little to do with the facts and more to do with bluster. He refused to answer that.

1620

So I say to the people of Ontario that, firstly, the dismissed board is telling us that they assumed they were carrying out the orders of the government. Mr Wilson, the Minister of Energy, being with them, they assumed they were following directions, and the evidence is this: no piece of correspondence from the government to the board until last week—nothing. So that's one other piece of evidence.

I disagree fundamentally with the salaries given to the senior officers there. I find that totally unacceptable. But as far as the board was concerned, they were acting under the direction of the government, in accordance with the government. There is no evidence that I've seen yet, anywhere from the government, that that wasn't the case. The only letter the government has to the board was dated last week.

We raised the issue about the salaries here on May 15, and Mr Stockwell said, "As soon as I was briefed back in April, I was so outraged about these things that I immediately got outraged." We raised this issue here on May 15 about the \$6-million severance package and the pension. Mr Stockwell in his answer never said one single thing about the salary. You can check the Hansard. Nothing. Zero. He was so outraged back there at that first briefing, outraged, and nothing happened—no letter to the board. We're told today that he was so outraged that he informed the Premier several weeks later. He was so outraged that he never responded on May 15, when we raised this in the Legislature.

So my charge is this: the board is saying publicly, and I believe the evidence supports this, that the government knew every step of the way what was going on. They appointed them, hand-picked, with a good deal of brag-

ging about this wonderful group. I can only assume that the government provided them with the necessary direction and the board said, "Yes, we will follow that."

Until last week, we had not seen one single piece of evidence that the government disagreed with the board. Now what's happening, frankly, is that the government is the laughingstock of the business community. You had a board that you picked, that thought they were following your directions. Then, when they got caught doing something the public didn't like but which the board thought you wanted them to do, you fire them and make them take the fall for you. Frankly, in my opinion the board shouldn't have done that, but they thought they were operating in conjunction with the government. You have completely bungled this and are making it worse with bluster and with bravado, and not with a sense of the importance of Hydro One to the province.

I think you'll get caught. I think eventually the truth will come out. We're going to have trouble getting it because the board members can't sue; because you're refusing to allow us to have a committee; because you're trying to stonewall this and you won't let us call the witnesses. But some day it will come out that the board at every step of the way operated with the approval of the government. They're taking the fall and the government thinks they can escape. I don't think it's going to happen.

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): I express my appreciation to my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt for allowing me to take some time. I don't, given some of my other responsibilities, get a lot of time to speak in this Legislature and I'm particularly pleased, therefore, to have time to speak on this bill.

The reason I say that is because I have a sneaking suspicion that when historians look back on this time and they look back on the next election and the defeat of the Conservative government under Premier Ernie Eves, what they're going to be writing about in great detail is how the Eves government lost its way and bungled things, particularly on the business of Ontario Hydro, and how they damaged that asset and turned an asset that is the single most valuable asset that the people of Ontario own into a political tool. I want to talk about that for a moment and I want to talk about—

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Is this your maiden speech?

Mr Sorbara: I gave my maiden speech several years before you arrived here, my friend.

I want to talk about how this government, on Hydro One, reflects a kind of arrogance and loss of direction that will ultimately bring them down to defeat.

So what's this bill about? It's the government saying, "Judge Gans said we can't sell it, so we need a piece of legislation to say we can sell it." You know something? Let's look at when the government started their waffling on Hydro One. The former Premier, Mike Harris, announced in this Legislature to enormous applause from that side of the House that Hydro One was going to be sold to private shareholders by way of an IPO. From that moment we had the resignation of Mike Harris; after that

we had a leadership debate. Was there one dissenting voice among all the leadership candidates about whether or not Hydro One should be sold by way of an IPO? Not one of them—not Ernie Eves, not Jim Flaherty, not the current Minister of Energy, Chris Stockwell. They all said, "Yes, great. It fits in with our pattern that the only good thing is a private thing. Look how we privatized Highway 407," for \$7 billion less than it was worth.

Not one of those leadership candidates made any mention of their opposition to the privatization of Hydro One. Not one of them expressed any concern about the management of Hydro One. Not one of them mentioned their concern about the salaries of the president and CEO of Hydro One. They all had to know about those salaries. Those salaries ultimately get approved by the shareholders. This business of Chris Stockwell saying, "I didn't know until May 9"—did he ever go to a cabinet meeting? Did the then Minister of Energy ever read his briefings? Shareholders approve salaries of senior executives, no matter what authority the board has. They knew about it and they knew about it back then. During the leadership campaign, not a word. They all thought it was a great idea: "We're going to privatize Hydro One."

So when did the conversion on the road to Damascus actually take place? If you read the history of the past couple of months, it's clear and evident. Ernie Eves won the leadership. Ernie Eves needed a seat in the Legislature. Mike Harris resigned his seat in the Legislature. There was to be a by-election in Nipissing; two by-elections. I don't know about you, Mr Speaker, but I worked in both of those by-elections and every day on the campaign trail I heard voters in Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey and I heard voters in Nipissing saying, "I can't abide the idea that this government is selling our transmission system." I heard it every single day. In Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey we had a young, bright candidate who had never run before and day after day people came up to him and said, "Josh Matlow, I'm going to vote for you. I am so angry about the sale of Hydro One," five days before election.

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Now I'm going to quote Premier Eves. He said, "Hydro One is not off the table; it's off the table for now." Let's translate that into English. In English that means "I'm in deep trouble trying to get a seat in the Legislature and holding on to Mike Harris's former seat. I'm going to take it off the table or I'm going to lose two by-elections." When you turn the province's business into short-term, two-bit political expediency, you lose your way, and that's exactly what happened. Was it coincidental that on the day of the by-elections, May 2, every major newspaper said, "Eves Takes Hydro One Privatization Off the Table"?

Now that he's elected and the Legislature has returned, suddenly we have a bill before this Legislature saying, "Do you know what? If we didn't have the authority according to the Superior Court of Ontario, we're going to give ourselves the authority." So now, the by-elections being over, it's back on the table. The course

is clear again: privatization is the order of the day. But it is this theme that is going to bring the Conservative government in Ontario to defeat in the next election, because what is important to them is not the public interest; it's private interests.

It's private interests that are now making a fortune on Highway 407. It's private interests that have had preference in education in Ontario—no money for public education; \$500 million for private education. If our friend Jim Flaherty, now the minister of not very much at all, were there, we would have private liquor stores. We're going to have private universities. It is that philosophy, that loss of interest in what is good in the public interest, that will ultimately bring them down.

If you examine the history of the past seven years, it's pretty clear what's happened. The private interests, that 20% at the top of the socio-economic ladder, the elite, have frankly done magnificently under Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, and Eleanor Clitheroe's salary is just one clear example of that. The elite not only have thrived, they've had a field day under Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

The 60% in the middle have been squeezed and squeezed. It's harder for them to pay the bills and the mortgage, their education and health care systems are poorer, the care of their frail and elderly is poorer, day care has been cut. The great middle class in Ontario has been squeezed to feed the rich in Ontario over the past seven years.

The 20% at the bottom—the frail, the elderly, the homeless, the poor, the dispossessed—have seen Ontario become a living hell for them.

That's the history of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves in Ontario. The privatization of Hydro One and Eleanor Clitheroe's salary will stand as symbols in the next election. People will see those symbols and they'll say, "We want to bring an end to that era when private interests drive the public agenda in Ontario." That's what's going to happen, and Ontarians will welcome a new generation of political leadership where the public interest and the public good will once again return to centre stage in this Legislature.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Ms Churley: In response to both of the Liberals who have spoken, I want to point out to the members that one of the government's justifications for going ahead with this privatization scheme that nobody wants—they're saying they still don't know exactly whether it's going to be sold off through an IPO or there might be some non-profit company set up. I have never seen such incompetence and mismanagement in this Legislature since I've been here, since 1990. I find it astounding.

If you look back through old Hansards and see some of the comments that party made when the NDP was in government trying to turn the big ship Hydro around—we all agree there were some problems that needed to be fixed, not in the transmission area but on the generation side—members of the third party, who were then the Conservatives, got up and went after Bob Rae time and

time again about his incompetence, his inability to turn it around, and on and on.

I find it very ironic. Who did the government turn to, to try to fix part of the big mess they'd created, part of the incredible, indefensible salaries and bonuses employees are making at Hydro One? Who did they go to, to try to fix the mess they created? Bob Rae. I find that truly ironic.

They must admit today that they've been incompetent, that they don't know what they're doing, that they've created a big mess. They're creating, with absolutely no justification, something that nobody in Ontario wants. They say that every cent that's made if they sell Hydro One would go back into paying the debt. If you look at what's really being said, a large portion of that money will be kept for general revenue.

Mr Maves: I actually hope people were at home listening for the last 20 minutes. I hope they had a bit of politics on their minds, because the two speakers you heard from the Liberal caucus just now are two people who are considered, I guess, all-stars, two of the leading guys in the Liberal Party opposite. They just had 20 minutes to talk about a bill that would protect consumers from unscrupulous retailers, that would protect corridor lands where transmission lines run, that would force governments—all governments—to pay down debt from any disposition of Hydro One assets, and that would protect the environment.

Do you know that neither one of those gentlemen even mentioned this bill or any of the content of this bill? We've got no idea where they stand on this bill. Do they want to protect the consumers? I guess they don't. Do they want to protect corridor lands? I thought previously they had said they did, but apparently not. Do they support paying down the debt with the proceeds of the sales? I don't know. Their whole speech was a bunch of empty rhetoric, hateful personal attacks and fearmongering.

Mr Sorbara: That's what you get from all-stars.

Mr Maves: The member opposite is now bragging, "Yes, that's what we did and that's why we're all-stars, because we're all about empty rhetoric, hateful personal attacks and fearmongering."

I want people to know that, while I think the NDP is also quite often filled with a lot of empty rhetoric, at least the NDP states positions on things. At least they consistently do that. At least they consistently talk about bills when they're before the Legislature. I hope the public at home watched that performance from the members opposite.

The Acting Speaker: I just want to explain that I do not censor. I do not decide what is true and what isn't true on what you say. If you want me to, then put that in the standing orders and I'll gladly do that. But until then, you're all honourable members; you're expected to put your ideas in debate, and it's my job to make sure you do that according to the rules as you've asked me to do.

With that, you have two minutes for comments and questions.

Mr Colle: I appreciate that, Mr Speaker. Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the very sage interventions on the part of the member for Scarborough-Agincourt and the member for Vaughan-King-Aurora.

I think the cogent comment they made was the reference to and the context of Highway 407. This is the government and the Minister of Finance who gave away one of the largest assets in Ontario history for \$7 billion under market price. Now they're telling us in the Legislature, "Trust us with Ontario Hydro, with Hydro One." The same minister, Minister Eves, the Minister of Finance, gave away a highway for \$7 billion under market price, and now he's saying, "Trust us with what we're going to do with our hydro." There's no way the people of Ontario trust this Premier now, who originally said he would sell Hydro One and then, on the eve of the by-election—not on the road to Damascus but on the road to Dufferin county—he realized he wouldn't get elected unless he made this false announcement, saying, "Hydro One sale off the table"—front page of the Toronto Star, front page of the National Post. Two days before the by-election in Dufferin-Peel he said, "Hydro sale off"; he said, "Trust me." This from the same Minister of Finance who gave away the 407. On the road to Dufferin county he said he was not going to sell it. Then he brings back a bill, Bill 58, with the Minister of Energy and says, "Oh, we are now going to forget what the Superior Court of Ontario and Judge Gans said. We don't care what the court says. We make up our own laws." The people of Ontario have to obey the laws, but not this government.

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Mr Kormos: I have but two minutes to respond to the capable comments that have been made during the course of debate. In short order you're going to be hearing from Marilyn Churley, the member from Toronto-Danforth. You've heard from Howard Hampton. I spoke to the bill. Marilyn Churley, our environmental critic, is going to speak about the serious environmental consequences of the privatization of hydro, whether it's the transmission end or the generation end.

You talked about the prospect of revisions to the standing orders, were you to be called upon to determine the veracity of any given comment. We'd have to call you Diogenes, then; we'd have to get you a lamp. I have had occasion from time to time, knowing full well what the rules are, to note that—think about this conundrum—it's OK to lie in the Legislature, but it's not OK to call someone a liar, is it? It's against the rules to call someone a liar but it's not against the rules to lie. I've always found that to be one of the paradoxes, one of the contradictions here.

So rather than suggesting that anybody has been lying, I have—

The Acting Speaker: As a matter of fact, you can't even use that term in this House. So I'll ask you to go on. You've made your point three times.

Mr Kormos: Rather than making that suggestion, I have had occasion to comment that were Diogenes to be

here with his lamp, he would be wandering back and forth, back and forth rather fecklessly. Think about the image of Diogenes looking and looking and looking—that endless pursuit—and the lamp burning on and on until the oil gets lower and lower and the flame starts to flicker. This would be an awfully lonely place for Diogenes on certain days.

Marilyn Churley of Toronto-Danforth will be speaking to this bill shortly this afternoon. I encourage people to pay close attention to her comments.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Vaughan-King-Aurora has two minutes to respond.

Mr Sorbara: First I'd like to reiterate the comments made by my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt that, given what has happened with our hydroelectric system, this government is becoming an embarrassment on Bay Street and on Main Street and across Ontario and Canada and, frankly, in world markets, because they represent a shining but horrible example of a government that will be driven into making decisions on public policy by the expedient political needs of the day.

Sir, 100 years ago a great Conservative named Adam Beck created a unique, at that time, and enormously successful organization called Ontario Hydro. Ninety years after that, an NDP government started to reorganize it. It is an embarrassment to Adam Beck and it's an embarrassment to good governance that the Conservative government under Ernie Eves has done such serious and perhaps irreparable damage to the organization that was created by a Conservative almost 100 years ago.

We're going to put it back together; there will be a time. But for right now, the point of my remarks and those of my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt is that the horrible manner in which this government has handled this brief will come back in the next election to haunt the government and, I believe, ultimately lead to its defeat.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Maves: Before I get into the total of my remarks, it was interesting that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt thought that this government since 1995 had changed its mind and not done what it said it would do. It's just quite comical, when everyone in Ontario knows that a large part of the election in 1999 was somewhat of a referendum by the people of Ontario to say, "They did what they said they would do. Did we like it or not like it?" Based on that, this government was re-elected.

When Premier Harris retired as the Premier of Ontario, you can go back and read the papers and see some of the news clips from the day when he announced his retirement and the following days. Even his staunchest critics, including members from the Liberal and NDP parties, praised him for doing one thing in politics that will always stand out, and that was that politicians could now be held to their word. They could be held to, "Did they do what they said they would do?"

For the member opposite to get up and complain that this government is somehow reducing people's confidence in politicians—I say to him, you should have a

look at your cousins in Ottawa. If you want to find a group of guys who over the years have ruined the public's faith in politicians, look at your cousins in Ottawa—your friends, or brothers and sisters actually.

As I said, the members opposite never even touched upon this bill, so we've got no idea if they're in favour of consumer protection, if they're in favour of making sure that the disposition of any assets of Hydro One, which is something that the bill allows, will get paid down on the debt—we have no idea of their positions on that.

I want to talk about something, and believe me, Speaker, it is relevant to the debate at hand. I want to talk to people about the Ontario Apple Generation Co. About 120 years ago—and, yes, this is a fictional story—it was decided that producing apples for consumption, for apple pies, for whatever, that building an orchard was too expensive—I'm sorry; the table's looking at me like I'm crazy, but they might get my point in a bit—for any one private individual or private company to build these apple orchards to supply the people of Ontario with apples. So they decided to make a public entity, a public monopoly, of apple orchards. They built apple orchards and it was going to supply apples at cost to the people of Ontario.

As the years went on, this public monopoly built more and more orchards and did supply apples to the people of Ontario. However, as the years went by, as always happens with monopolies, and the world shows this in every instance, that apple monopoly became more and more bloated. More and more cousins were hired and more and more brothers and sons were hired and they had way more staff than was required to do the job. There were inflexible work arrangements and work rules so that efficiencies were very poor. Because it was a monopoly, it didn't have to compete for selling apples against any other apple producers; they were just able to raise the price of those apples year after year to pay for these inefficiencies.

As time went on, the public looked around and said, "You know what? Apples don't cost this much in other places around the world. In other places around the world there is competition for apple production, and private companies can produce apples." So they said, "You know what? Let other people produce apples." So somebody finally said, "All right, we'll let someone else produce apples," and when they did, what happened? Well, the private sector could produce the apples. They produced thousands more apples and, lo and behold, they could produce them for a lower price, they could produce them more efficiently and the price of apples came down in Ontario.

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Also at the time, they developed the Ontario apple transmission company. They didn't want to transmit apples through private trucking companies, so they came up with their own trucking company, a fleet of vans and trucks to deliver the apples around Ontario. The same thing happened with that monopoly. Over the years it became bloated. There were too many staff and it was too

inefficient, and somebody eventually said, "Why don't we let all these other trucking companies around the province in on the ability to truck these apples?" Eventually they did that. They sold off their fleet and rid Ontario of these two monopolies. They had a much more efficient apple system. More apples were produced at lower prices, and industries boomed because of that.

It's obviously a fictional story, but a story that demonstrates what has happened in this province over the years with Hydro. We did have this public monopoly, which was necessary at the beginning because capital costs were too high to produce hydro for this province, and for many years that public monopoly served us well. But no matter what party you were from and no matter what your political philosophy was, everyone knew that old monopoly had become inefficient and needed fixing.

In 1995-96 we appointed the Macdonald commission to look into Hydro. Even though everyone for so many years had been saying, "Open it up to competition. Let other people generate and sell that power on the grid," we still had another commission, and they told us that very same thing. So finally we did move to open up the energy market. It opened up to competition this year and, lo and behold, the average price of power in Ontario is down over 30% in the first month of the opening.

We also moved forward and we decided: we have this transmission system. The old monopoly, for a variety of reasons—because of cost overruns, as some members have said in the past in this Legislature, but also because that old, inefficient monopoly couldn't cover its costs, so debt was added when it couldn't cover its costs.

Even though over the years the price went up—I know that from 1985 to 1993, when the members opposite were in office, the Ontario Hydro price went up 93%; that's right, 93%. In fact, I remember the very early 1990s, when the NDP were in office. Before they froze hydro rates, Bob Rae, the then Premier, was considered the businessman of the year in Buffalo, because so many businesses said, "We can get lower taxes, we can get lower hydro rates in Buffalo, right across the border." A lot of people went there. I know manufacturing facilities in Niagara Falls that left in that five-year period precisely because they were being overtaxed and over-regulated and had to pay higher and higher compensation costs and higher and higher hydro rates. So we did have a flight of jobs.

As I said, since the market has opened—we trusted that, we trusted the market, we trusted competition, as so many people before us have also done and as so many people advised governments previously to do—indeed the price of power has come down. The price of power will fluctuate. There will be days when—the law of supply and demand—demand will be higher because of heat and because people will turn on their air conditioners, and you will see the price go up. We have already seen the price go from a penny a kilowatt hour to seven cents a kilowatt hour. That's in the middle of the day when everyone is using the most power. But on average the

price of power is down dramatically, and it's that average price that matters most.

There was even a situation before we opened it up. I have many large power-consuming companies in my riding: Norton, a ceramics company; Washington Mills; Abitibi Paper in Thorold—a whole variety of large major power consumers in the Niagara area. They came there originally because we had cheap power, but over the years that cheap power advantage was lost. I used to say to them, "Why don't you guys just produce your own power? It's really not that difficult any more to do a cogeneration facility." The reason why a lot of those companies which had considered making a major investment to produce their own power so they wouldn't have to be a price-taker from the one person who could sell power in Ontario, Ontario Hydro—the reason they didn't was because they would produce more power than they could use and then they would have nothing to do with it, no place to sell that excess power.

When we opened up the market, there are all kinds of people who produce their own power who now can put their power on the grid. In fact, they're not just big companies. There are very small producers of energy that can now put their excess power into the market and that's what's helping to keep the rate lower.

Premier Eves asked Minister Stockwell to go out and consult on the future of Hydro One after the justice's decision that we didn't have the right, on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario, to dispose of some assets, and he went out and consulted with people. I was at the hearings in Niagara Falls and I know Mr Kormos was there also. One of the things people clearly said they needed in this new era of electricity, open markets, open competition and the government of Ontario perhaps no longer being the owner of transmission, was, "We want more protection for consumers from unscrupulous retailers."

Members opposite have talked about actual criminal stories, of people forging people's names on documents. I hope that the members opposite, when they run into that, are actually reporting those incidents to the police, because those are criminal activities. But one of the things the public has said is, "We want more protection from unscrupulous retailers." In fact, Bill 58 that we are discussing today does just that.

What else did we hear? We also heard that a lot of people were concerned about and wanted to see the protection of the corridor lands. Through all communities in Ontario you see the big transmission lines of Hydro One that transmit power to consumers. They wanted to make sure those corridors were protected. In fact, I think the city of Toronto and probably other municipalities said they're very important public assets and we need them protected. This legislation, Bill 58, also does that.

A lot of people said, "If you sell Hydro One assets and let the OEB regulate the rates that are charged," just like in the gas industry, which is a highly regulated industry and the pipelines are not owned by the public, "if you do go that route, what we want to make sure of is that any

proceeds you get from the sale of assets go to paying down the \$38-billion debt that old monopoly of Ontario Hydro has left the people of Ontario." Again, this bill, Bill 58, makes it clear that that is what will happen.

People also have a great deal of concern about the environment. One of the great things, quite frankly, about opening up the market and allowing other generators is that we're getting wind generation now, we're getting solar generation and we're getting cleaner forms of generation coming into the market that weren't allowed before. It's very environmentally friendly to say to people, "Look, instead of just having old Ontario Hydro's power on the grid, all of these other forms of power can now come on the grid and be sold." We want that green energy, and more of that green energy is now being supplied. There are some amendments to the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act in this bill which will help us protect the environment further.

These are all important things that are in Bill 58 and, as I said at the outset and actually in some of my earlier comments, it's important that when a judge decided we didn't have clear authority to do what we wanted with the assets that everybody else—most people in Ontario and, I believe, the members opposite also—believed we had, which was the right too dispose of certain assets held by the crown, this bill does give us that ability.

When Minister Stockwell went out, people also said, "We may not want you to sell 100% of Hydro One. Maybe you should look at some other options. Maybe you should look at selling a percentage of it. Maybe you should look at an income trust. Maybe you should look at a long-term lease." They wanted you to consider more of those options, and the minister and the Premier have said they're open to looking at all of those options. They've done that.

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This simply clarifies that if we sell, if at the end of the day the decision is taken to sell all of Hydro One, it gives us the legal authority to do it, as we thought we had and as most people thought we had. If we decided to sell 49% of it, it would be clear that we had the authority to do that. So that's a new thing.

Will we go forward and do that? That remains to be seen. There are a lot of very learned people who have said the best thing to do with the transmission lines and Hydro One is an IPO, to sell the shares and let the private sector bring some discipline to what is currently Hydro One. The members opposite, with all their complaints about Hydro One and OPG lately, are maybe signalling that, yes, maybe there does need to be some discipline brought to bear on these companies.

As I said, Donald Macdonald, who did the study for us in 1995-96, a former Liberal cabinet minister, is very supportive of the sale of Hydro One. Jan Carr, an Acres engineer—Acres is one of the leading engineering firms for hydroelectric projects across the province—sat on that committee and he believes the sale of Hydro One is the right way to go. AMPCO, the Association of Major Power Consumers of Ontario, is very supportive of the

move to open up the markets and they are going to be among the chief beneficiaries of that. The Ontario Energy Association is supportive. Energy Probe's Tom Adams is a gentleman who's very learned on Hydro matters and is often quoted in the papers and on the radio and is a keen observer in matters of Hydro in the province. He believes it's the right thing to do. Maurice Strong, former NDP-appointed chairman of Ontario Hydro, believes it's the right way to go.

President Don MacKinnon of the Power Workers' Union: they have even taken out ads that say "Public Offering Best Way to Meet Hydro One's Investment Needs" in the future. They believe we should proceed with the IPO because, and I quote from their ad, "No government—current or future—will underwrite the billions of dollars that will be needed to ensure the necessary maintenance and expansion of the Hydro One system. An IPO brings needed investment while giving Ontarians a chance to invest in the future of the company."

They say, "Continuing with effective regulation—there's more regulation now than ever before. The result is good for customers.... The Ontario Energy Board now has the power and the expertise to regulate the wires sector by setting rates and ensuring service levels."

They finish off in their ad by saying, "Members of the Power Workers' Union are electricity customers just like everyone else. We too depend on a strong, safe 'electric highway' system. Investment, not rhetoric, will ensure the system is maintained and the high value services our members provide continue. The debate isn't about public versus private—it's about investment and jobs."

I commend Mr MacKinnon and the Power Workers' Union because a forward-looking and aggressive position like that is probably something that's not looked on that favourably by the rest of the labour movement. In fact, it wasn't the Power Workers' Union that went to court to try to stop the disposition and the IPO of Hydro One at all. As you can see, they're in favour. It was other unions—CUPE. I'm quite happy that the Power Workers' Union is looking to the future to turn OPG and Hydro One, in whatever form it ends up taking, into aggressive, growing companies, with investment that will protect the jobs of the people who work there for many years to come.

I commend them for taking the step they've taken. I've talked to many people, obviously in Niagara Falls, which is the birthplace of Hydro, and a lot of people still work for Ontario Hydro. I've spoken to a lot of them. They're really reforming their systems within OPG and Hydro One, because they want to be aggressive, they want to be a successful company and they want to sell power, not only in Ontario but in other parts of the world. I commend them for that. It's not that recoil-in-fear attitude that exists in so many other social democratic circles, so I commend them for that.

Those are my comments on the bill. I look forward to hearing the thoughts of the rest of my colleagues in the Legislature on Bill 58.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Colle: Thank you so much, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity to comment on the member for Niagara Falls. I notice the member referred to Bob Rae being made the businessman of the year when he was Premier.

Mr Maves: Of Buffalo.

Mr Colle: Yes, Buffalo. But it seems his Premier is now going to appoint Bob Rae, I think the same Bob Rae, to run Hydro One. I don't know if he's heard that. Member for Niagara Falls, you said there was something wrong with Bob Rae, businessman of the year in Buffalo. Now your Premier is saying that was not true. Bob Rae did a great job and he's now going to run Hydro One.

Ms Churley: He's going to fix up our mess for us.

Mr Colle: Yes. So the guy who destroyed the province and whom they rant and rave about has just been given a plum job by the Premier. So all the stuff we've heard about Bob Rae from the government side is something they didn't believe in and were just talking about. But the latest news is Premier Eves is bringing in Bob Rae to bail out Hydro One.

Not only that, he's going to team up with Pink Floyd, who's now running the Ontario Energy Board. The two of them are running Hydro now. The Ontario Energy Board is that toothless tiger that has only four inspectors for the whole province of Ontario to inspect over two million contracts in gas and electricity. The government of Ernie Eves is asking Floyd Laughren and Bob Rae basically to get them out of the mess they're in.

I'm looking forward to the next member on the Conservative side standing up here and saying, "We were wrong about Bob Rae. We were wrong about Floyd Laughren. We made a mistake and we're bringing them in to bail us out of a mess we created with Ontario Hydro." So Floyd Laughren is there at the Ontario Energy Board and Bob Rae is now going to run Hydro One. Please explain this to me.

Mr Kormos: The decision, the proposal, the pro-position of selling off Hydro One—Ontario Hydro, Hydro One and the generating section of it—is probably the most dramatic decision that will be made in this province. It will have long-lasting consequences. When we reflect on the impact of NAFTA, we may never be able to restore ownership of Ontario hydroelectricity to the people of this province. If we do, it will be very painful, expensive and difficult.

Yet this government is shutting down the debate as of 6 pm this evening. I have just been served with a notice of motion which is the most disgusting and obscene affront and assault to democracy, and a clear and deliberate effort to exorcise what has been a strong opposition to this bill and the sell-off of Ontario Hydro. This notice of motion is shutting down debate as of 6 pm this evening. There will not be another second of second reading debate. It provides for so-called committee hearings that mock the public. This government holds the people of this province in disdain, and it's the content of this notice of motion, this time allocation motion that I've been served with, that illustrates that. That is the evidence of

that. Third reading? Sixty minutes in total, 20 minutes per caucus, to debate third reading after so-called committee hearings. A mere handful of half-days for committee hearings, access to virtually—not virtually; no access to the north, modest access to a couple of places outside Toronto. This is a disgusting betrayal by this government of the interests of the people of this province.

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Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): Perhaps we could add some light rather than darkness to the debate here. We've had an awful lot of bluster from our members opposite. The member for Niagara Centre is great at dramatizing that time allocation is an obscene, disgusting matter, and yet this morning—if you want to shed some real light on the discussion of the whole Hydro One issue or the old Ontario Hydro, all you've got to do is get a copy of the Provincial Auditor's report that came to the public accounts committee, which in essence asked, "What kind of a deal was there behind the Bruce nuclear transaction of 2000?" This whole investigation was undertaken by a motion made by the member for Nickel Belt because she suspected very strongly that there would be some problems, some mystery, about Hydro One, about Ontario Power Generation and the whole British Energy deal.

Guess what? The question that was asked by the auditor was whether the auction was conducted in a manner that resulted in a competitive bidding process and the highest bid being accepted. Guess what conclusion he came to, which completely took the sails out of these contenders across the way? The report said the process was honestly conducted; a professional, sound, business-like approach.

The next question asked, which is still open because it's an ongoing exercise here, is, "Did the taxpayer receive fundamental value for this deal?" There's no doubt about it. If you contrast the reactors that are open compared to the ones under the nuclear Bruce, they aren't open, and that's contributing not a penny to the stranded debt.

Mr Bryant: I'm just looking at this notice of motion for Bill 58. It obviously affects the bill that's before the House right now. This is remarkable. Not only is the government refusing to give the Legislature the last word, engaging in an affront to democracy and a real perversion of the parliamentary process by giving the executive a blank cheque to determine the future of Hydro One instead of having the guts to bring the issue to this House and having MPPs vote it up or down—one way or another, up or down. In fact, the government can't do that. One of the reasons they can't do that, interestingly, is I don't think they could get the support of this caucus. I don't think this caucus would support Hydro One privatization. So they want to have a shield.

But to make matters worse, they're going to bring a guillotine motion, a debate-killing motion, an anti-democratic motion, to help move along the anti-democratic bill. It's the blank-cheque motion for the blank-cheque bill.

Yet again—I can't believe it—the Premier says one thing one day and then he says something else the next day. Remember in question period he said we're going to have weeks of committee hearings? Do you know how many weeks of committee hearings we're going to have? Zero. They don't even have one week of committee hearings. He said we'd get weeks, and we didn't even get one week of committee hearings. He promised full consultations; we don't get full consultations. He said that it was on the table and then he said it was off the table and then, guess what now? It's back on the table again. He said we'd have weeks of committee hearings and full debate in this Legislature and now comes the guillotine motion, now comes the debate-killing motion. This government has got to be the most anti-democratic government in the history of this country. It's got to be.

Mr Maves: You know, it's interesting. The members opposite and the NDP really started and embraced time allocation motions as a way to have bills proceed through the legislative process over the years. We also debate things and we can see that the opposition doesn't intend to let them proceed, so now and then you have to bring in a time allocation motion. It's just really comical, if anyone who watches on a regular basis at home has seen this routine put on before by the member from Niagara Centre and the members from the Liberal Party.

What's really funny about it this time is that in the time we've debated it so far, none of them has even spoken about the bill. If we had more time to debate the bill, what would they talk about? They haven't talked about the bill yet, so why would we believe that with more time they're going to start talking about the bill?

The member for Eglinton-Lawrence asked about Bob Rae. He should realize, if he was a bit more keen an observer of politics, that somewhere along when Bob Rae was Premier of Ontario, he had a bit of change of heart about his socialist leanings. Some of the socialist members of his caucus will tell you about that. Not only that, but ever since Mr Rae has been in the private sector—I caught him on CPAC one day speaking to an audience in the United States in favour of free trade, in fact mocking the Americans for tariffs. If the member could be a little keener observer of politics, he'd realize Mr Rae has had a sea change in his socialist beliefs that he once held so dear. Those are the comments I'd like to make.

My colleague Mr Hastings made a great point—the auditor's report on Bruce today was very interesting. Because of Bruce Power, we have \$1.2 billion of investment in the sector that we wouldn't have had, thousands more megawatt hours and a lower price because they've got more power in the grid.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Colle: As you know, Mr Speaker, this government is again trying to block us from asking questions about this bill. It is cutting off debate at six o'clock today. It has done it over 40 times. The most cutting off of debate in Ontario's history has been done by this government.

They don't want the people of Ontario to know what they're doing here. They want to ram this through, be-

cause they don't want us to talk about the mess they've created with Hydro. They don't want us to ask questions about the salaries they gave their friends. Ron Osborne, who runs Ontario Power Generation, \$2.3 million—they don't want to talk about his salary, his car allowance, his vacation pay. We can't talk about that. That's why they want to cut off debate.

They don't want us to talk about Eleanor Clitheroe's yacht, her \$172,000 car allowance. That's why they're stopping this debate. They're embarrassed by the fact that for three years they gave Ron Osborne and Eleanor Clitheroe whatever they wanted. If they wanted a fancy Aston Martin to drive, they got it from this government. If they wanted a yacht, they got it. This is what they were giving the people who ran Ontario Hydro.

This government gave them gross things at the expense of the taxpayer, who meanwhile was being subjected to harassment by this government and its door-to-door agents who were milking Ontarians of millions by forcing them to sign contracts for gas, forcing them to sign electricity contracts under false pretences. For three years this government condoned that and allowed it to happen. They did the same thing with a bill they passed in 1998 called the Electricity Act, where they made legal all this door-to-door hustling illegality.

Then we heard this government today scoffing at the Ontario Superior Court decision. The same government that allowed door-to-door illegalities is saying the Ontario Superior Court should be ignored. They're saying, "Judge Gans should be ignored. We will not abide by his ruling." This government of Ernie Eves is bringing in a law today, Bill 58. They want to ram it through without debate because this law is basically an attempt to negate the Ontario Superior Court.

Can you imagine if Mr and Mrs Joe Citizen, living in Welland or Thorold or Wawa or Stratford, scoffed at the Ontario Superior Court? What could the ordinary citizen do if they were found guilty of an offence by the Ontario Superior Court? Well they certainly couldn't come to this Legislature and write a law, ram it through and disregard the Ontario Superior Court decision.

They want to ram this through, because they don't want the public to know this government is disobeying the law. They want to make their own laws without the public knowing about it, and the public is going to be shortchanged. The public is going to be abused even more because in this legislation there is no consumer protection. The same kind of scandalous door-to-door behaviour that this government made legal with the gas marketers and the electricity rip-off artists is going to continue.

1720

One thing in particular, as I mentioned before: their own company, run by Eleanor Clitheroe and her yachts, held a door-to-door sales campaign where they signed up 198,000 Ontarians to electricity contracts. They went to the doors of seniors all over this province and said, "Sign with Onsource," which is the Ontario company. "We're Ontario Hydro. You can trust us. We've been in business

for 100 years. Sign on the dotted line." They signed up 198,000 people to electricity contracts. They even signed up a couple of hundred thousand to telephone contracts and gas contracts. Up to almost 400,000 Ontarians were signed by their company, Ms Clitheroe's company, on the premise that they were signing with Ontario Hydro, a trustworthy company.

Do you know what this government allowed Ms Clitheroe and Mr Osborne to do? They allowed them to sell these contracts, flip them, to a company in Alberta, a company that nobody had ever heard of in Ontario. They basically used the goodwill of over 395,000 Ontarians to line the pockets of Ms Clitheroe and of this company in Alberta that nobody has ever hear of and no one in this government even raised a hackle. In fact, the Minister of Energy said it was OK because it was in the fine print of one of these phony contracts. Bill 58 still allows for that fine print, which is going to mean that more and more seniors are going to be subjected to the door-to-door marketers that this government has unleashed across this province like a swarm of locusts. This will continue. They will continue to rip off seniors and people who can't cope with English as a first language. This does nothing to stop that.

I was just fascinated by the member for Niagara Falls coming to the defence of Bob Rae, saying all that stuff—all the attacks they made on Bob Rae here for seven years. For seven years we heard nothing but Bob Rae bashing. Now that they have plucked Bob Rae back from Bay Street to save them from the mess of Hydro One, they are saying that Bob Rae is great. The member for Niagara Falls is now saying that Bob Rae has seen the light, that he's now reformed, that he's now going to be the saviour of Hydro. That's what they're saying. For seven years with Mike Harris, Bob Rae is no good. Now Ernie Eves and Bart Maves, the member for Niagara Falls, are coming to the defence of Bob Rae. Incredible. Then, as I said, Bob Rae's partner will be none other than the former Treasurer of the province of Ontario under the New Democratic regime. Floyd Laughren is now running the Ontario Energy Board, which is supposed to protect millions of Ontario consumers with four inspectors. That's all the money they've given the Ontario Energy Board: to hire four inspectors to protect millions of households from the government's door-to-door marketers that it permits to go and rip off seniors, rip off anybody who walks for greed.

In fact this government, by being so negligent, is giving door-to-door salespeople a bad name. Usually door-to-door people are not bad people, but by telling them—it was the Electricity Act in 1998 and it's this Bill 58. What they've said is, "You can do anything you want door to door. Just sign them up. Make your millions." I remember when this first broke, these door-to-door marketers of the government were getting busloads of students and dropping them off in Bramalea at 8 o'clock in the morning, saying, "We'll pick you up at supper-time." These poor kids were going door to door on a commission basis. They didn't know what they were

selling. They were basically left abandoned to try and hustle this stuff door to door.

This government is obviously in deep trouble. We've never seen such a series of incompetence, negligence. They claimed for three years they didn't know Ron Osborne and Eleanor Clitheroe were getting these yachts and these limos. They didn't know that. They didn't know these people were getting paid \$2.3 million. They said, "It wasn't me; it was the other minister." They didn't see anything. Now they say, "Trust us. We are going to do much better. Ram through this bill and we will do much better."

As we well know, this is the same Minister of Finance, Mr Ernie Eves, who's now Premier, who gave away Highway 407 for \$7 billion under market value. He is now telling us, "Trust us with the sale of Hydro One." Whom are they going to sell Hydro to? I don't know, but you can rest assured that it will be some Spanish consortium like the one that owns 407 and it will be their Tory hangers-on who will be there on the sidelines, the Clitheroes and the Osbornes. They'll be there sucking back the millions at the expense of those poor seniors, who, when they see those hydro and gas bills, can hardly stop from, really, throwing up, they are so upset. They know that this government has let them down. They know that this government only cares about the Osbornes of this world, the Clitheroes of this world and doesn't care about people who are trying to pay their bills, who have been good taxpayers, good citizens. All they want is basic hydro. All they want is gas to heat their homes. They don't want to pay for yachts and \$2.3-million salaries for Osborne and Clitheroe.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Kormos: Marilyn Churley, the member from Toronto-Danforth, is going to be speaking to this bill shortly from an environmental perspective.

I'm going to give you a phone number, Speaker. It's a very important phone number. I want you to write this down, please. This phone number is 416-325-6639. Speaker, I want you and other people who are concerned about the way the government's ramming this bill through to start calling that phone number.

Ms Churley: What is it again?

Mr Kormos: That's the government caucus office: 416-325-6639. As I say, the number is 416-325-6639. I want you to share this number with your neighbours, I want you to share this number with your children—416-325-6639. I want that phone to be jammed Monday morning. I want the government caucus office to be in disarray because none of the caucus members will be able to phone in; all they'll hear are busy signals because folks are calling in. That's 416-325-6639.

Now, if you want to fax baby pictures, wedding photos, holiday brochures: 416-325-6300, the government caucus office. Fax the government caucus office. Jam up that fax machine. Make it go through ink cartridges like there is no tomorrow. Fax 416-325-6300. Gum things up, because let me tell you, this government

is gumming things up for you, folks. It's about time we gummed things up for them.

The Acting Speaker: This is infomercial time and now is the opportunity for the member for Scarborough Centre. Comments and questions.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Speaker, I really did not heckle the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, because so much of what he said left me absolutely speechless. This individual, I recall, sat on Metro council, he was a Metro councillor, and he cannot sit in his chair today and tell me he did not participate in debate about the disposal of Metropolitan Toronto assets.

What this judge's decision says is, we cannot dispose of our own public assets. He absolutely freezes our opportunity to look after our own assets. There's nothing in this bill—as Mr Colle well knows even though he obviously has not read the bill, because it is enabling legislation, OK—absolutely nothing that decides the fate of Ontario Hydro. This bill simply reinforces the fact and the historical reality, which you must know if you sat on Metro council, that anything owned by the Ontario government was fair game for disposal, enhancement, alteration—whatever the province and its elected members in their infinite wisdom decided to do with that asset was fair game. You should understand that, Mr Colle. I certainly do.

1730

Mr Phillips: I just want to say that the member for Eglinton-Lawrence makes for the public the right case on this Hydro One board.

The charge I make is that the government knew every step of the way everything the Hydro One board was doing. Ernie Eves was the Deputy Premier. He was the big guy in charge of the finances and ran everything. He knew that entire board. They were hand-picked by the government. They were given directions on what they should be doing and they agreed to carry it out.

The Minister of Energy, Mr Wilson, met with them frequently. They informed them—these are professional board people—every step of the way. The government only blew the whistle on this salary—this was raised on May 15, 2002, in the Legislature. When we raised it here in the Legislature, neither Mr Eves nor Mr Stockwell said one thing. We raised the \$6-million severance. Check the Hansard. Neither Mr Eves nor Mr Stockwell condemned it or said one single thing. It was only in the days later when the firestorm blew that the government tried to distance itself from the decisions that the province of Ontario have a right to hold them 100% responsible for.

Mr Wilson said he saw this board getting out of control two years ago. I challenge the government again: prove that. Give us one piece of evidence. When Mr Wilson saw the board getting out of control with these abhorrent salaries, as he called them, what did he do on behalf of the people of Ontario? Table a letter that you sent to the board? Table minutes that you sent to the board? The board got nothing from this government until last week. If that is not the case, I challenge the government to refute it.

Ms Churley: I want to say to the government that when the government members stand up and tell us they are putting forward this bill because they were told by the court they don't have the right to sell public assets so they're going to court now, appealing it and bringing in legislation—which, by the way, is retroactive in some cases—so they can sell one of the most valuable assets that belongs to the people of Ontario, they have not been given the authority to do that.

Furthermore, it is very clear that the people of Ontario are saying no to the sell-off of Hydro One and indeed Ontario Hydro Generation. Just because this asset belongs to the government of Ontario—let me distinguish for you what that means. You and I are here to represent the people of Ontario, and they are telling this government very clearly that they own this asset. They don't want this bill before the Legislature. They want them to listen to the court decision and make it very clear they are going to listen to the people and not even contemplate selling it off. They want the Premier to stand up and say, "We are taking it off the table. We are not going to sell it." Instead, they bring forward a piece of legislation that is allowing them to take this very valuable asset, which is in good public hands, which is making a profit and servicing our energy needs, and they want to sell it.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Eglinton-Lawrence has two minutes to respond.

Mr Colle: I appreciate the final opportunity to sum up. I just want to thank the member from Scarborough Centre for saying that I made her breathless with my speech. I know she has always been a good colleague in Metro and I appreciate those kind remarks. I want to tell her that I was trying to recall what assets we were trying to get rid of at Metro. The only asset they wanted to get rid of at that time was our electric trolleys, but I was in favour of trying to keep them. It was Mr Leach, your former colleague, who wanted to sell those assets and I didn't want him to do it.

I just want to say that Bill 58 is basically—I call it the We Are Above the Law Act. This government, by passing Bill 58, which it is ramming through by 6 o'clock tonight, is disregarding the decision of the Ontario Superior Court, which was clear and explicit. It said it was illegal for this government to proceed with the sale. So Bill 58 is basically saying, "We are above the law. The government of Ontario, doesn't have to obey the Superior Court. We are going to make our own law." That's why, in conscience, there is no way anybody in this Legislature can support Bill 58.

I agree that we have to get people in Ontario to call in, phone in to the Premier's office—never mind the caucus office—at 416-325-1941, and tell the Premier of this province that he is not above the law; to obey the law and not to sell off Hydro One and not to make the same mistake he did when he sold off the 407 for \$7 billion under market price. Again, the Premier's number, to say no to the sale, is 416-325-1941. Call Ernie and tell him no.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Churley: I have 10 minutes, because under this government's anti-democratic rules we have now reverted from 20 minutes to 10 minutes. Because of the time allocation motion put forth today, this is going to be my only opportunity to speak on this bill, and I can guarantee you I have a lot to say about this bill.

Let me start by congratulating CEP and CUPE for putting up the resources and having the guts to take this government on and defeat them in court. We would not even be here debating this bill at this time if it weren't for CEP and CUPE going to court, defeating the government and forcing them to at least delay their privatization of Hydro One, forcing them to at least talk to the people and rethink what they're doing. But then they come forward with a bill that opens the door to allow them to privatize Hydro One, when they know that the people of Ontario don't want them to do that.

The Tories did not even commission a single study—not one study did they do. They didn't consult and they tried to proceed without debate in this House. All of a sudden, out of the blue—they had announced that they were going to privatize the generation side. We were fighting that vigorously but it was out there at least. This came out of the blue, and we all know why: because the government brought forward a bill that said they can't have a deficit. They're in some economic trouble. They are giving corporations big tax cuts again and this is an opportunity to make a fast buck.

If you read their bill carefully, even though government members and the minister and the Premier stand up and say, "Every cent that is made off the sale will go into paying down the debt on Hydro," that indeed is not the case. There are provisions in there whereby the government can remove billions of that money from the sale, whatever it is, to put into the general revenue.

1740

I want to come back to CUPE and CEP for at least allowing us the opportunity to have this discussion and this debate. There was a story in the Toronto Star that said it was the action that these two unions mounted that ignited the public in opposition. The story I read did acknowledge that Howard Hampton has been leading the fight, leading the charge, on opposing the privatization of both Hydro One and generation. But the story said that his campaign failed to ignite.

I want to say here in this House that that is not the case. In fact André Foucault, the president of CEP, sent me a copy of a letter he wrote in response to that story to the Star. It did not get published, but I want to say to people clearly what the president of CEP said in that letter. He said that if it weren't for Howard Hampton's spirited and inspirational campaign, CEP and CUPE probably would not have gone to court. They saw Howard Hampton out there day after day, criss-crossing the province in the Public Power bus, going to community after community, talking directly to the people about the implications of the privatization of both Hydro One and the generation of power. Community after community, hundreds and hundreds of people, came out and

signed petitions. In fact, polls show—it has probably increased now, but up to 70% at that time were opposed. This letter did not get printed, but he stated that they were inspired by the work of Mr Hampton and his campaign to proceed and take a chance, using up a lot of their resources to go to court.

I was in the courtroom when the judge was reading his decision, and indeed it was a great victory, not only for those unions but for all of those who are in opposition to this odious plan to sell off one of our incredible public assets.

One of the things about this bill that we can claim as a victory, and it is a victory, is the section that talks about protecting the hydro transmission lines. I have here two news stories, one dated Sunday, March 10, and another dated April 3.

"Three left-wing politicians are urging Tory leadership candidates to prevent more than 4,000 hectares of provincial hydro corridor lands from falling into private hands.

"Toronto city Councillor Jack Layton also said he plans to ask council for a two-year freeze on any sale....

"Layton, NDP leader Howard Hampton and Toronto-Danforth New Democrat MPP Marilyn Churley announced the initiatives yesterday at the GO Transit terminal." That was when we first alerted the public to what was in the prospectus.

Then again on April 3, "The prospectus being used to privatize Hydro One puts public transit at risk, NDP deputy leader Marilyn Churley said today." Again on April 3, I along with others in my caucus alerted the public and the government to the fact that under the prospectus they put out, this valuable land could be sold off. We alerted the government to this, and it is one area in this bill where the government did listen. It never should have been included in the first place, and they had to be urged and pushed to make that provision.

The other thing I want to talk about is the energy consumers' bill of rights. The government says they can't make it retroactive to protect up to one million customers who signed with energy marketers prior to the enactment of this bill—up to one million people, many of them vulnerable people and seniors who have been ripped off, and there is nothing in this bill to help them. It's over for them. But the really odious thing about that is that the government says they can't do it. At the same time, this is the same government that is plugging a loophole that would have rendered the privatization of utilities illegal. They are making that amendment retroactive to 1998. When it suits their own purposes, they've made clauses in this bill before us retroactive to 1998. Yet they would not put in the energy consumers' bill of rights, a retroactive clause to protect vulnerable people, many on fixed incomes who will not be able to afford these higher rates, because it didn't suit their interests. When it suits their interests, it's retroactive; when it doesn't, it's not in there.

Finally, in the couple of minutes I have left, I want to speak directly to some of the claims the government is

making about the environment and the privatization of Hydro. I have some press releases and statements by environment groups here.

The Toronto Environmental Alliance is saying directly to the government—and they keep ignoring this—that "The Ontario government's plan for electricity privatization and deregulation in light of the experience with electricity restructuring in the United States and Europe"—they find by looking at this government's plan that it provides incentives to produce and sell more power from the province's highly polluting coal-fired plants and nuclear generating stations; that it will increase the more than 1,900 premature deaths due to air pollution in the province from smog; that it creates barriers to introducing green power from renewable sources like wind and solar power. Stop making those claims that if you privatize Hydro it's actually going to bring the ability to bring these green producers on side. In fact, it's the opposite. Your plan is not structured to do that. It creates markets that are easily manipulated by large private power companies to increase profits and squeeze out the small green power providers. It makes the electrical sector subject to the rules of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which put profits over environmental protection and will limit what future Ontario governments are able to do to promote conservation and green power. That's the real story behind this.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Hastings: Once again we have to reiterate some very fundamental premises about this bill and about the whole Hydro debate, in the broadest context. What we usually have emanating from our friends across the way, the old socialists, is that you should pretty well keep everything the way it is, such as that a monopoly is one of the best ways of providing power, that you don't need to make any change.

Even the auditor's report, in its criticism of some of the assumptions in here, certainly points out that what is so good, and I referred to this earlier, with respect to the Bruce A nuclear reactor units that right now are mothballed—they're not producing a penny. According to the approach by the members opposite, that's probably a pretty good thing. To reopen them, Ontario Power Generation noted it would take at least \$600 million. That's what they told the auditor. But according to the socialists across the way, keep them closed, expand the stranded debt, establish the status quo.

It's very interesting. I had an experience recently with Canada Post. They're in the business, as a monopoly, of providing the mail. I sent an item away registered mail. You think, "Oh, it'll get there." Guess what? It didn't get there. Guess how long it took to figure out where the thing went? It's only a little item, it's not that important, but it's illustrative of the attitude of monopolies. It took about 90 days to trace it. Guess how they do it? By manual tracing. They don't even have a bar code to deal with it. That's why we need—

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

1750

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It is a pleasure to comment on the remarks of the member for Toronto-Danforth. The main point here, and it was partly made, I think, is that Bill 58 is really the Band-Aid bill. The government got its hand in the socket. There's no other way to put it. They got a big shock from the courts. This is a deal they cooked up in the Albany Club with the outgoing Premier. He was going to sell off Hydro One, sell off what the 1998 report that begat the electricity bill said you cannot sell off without having self-dealing and manipulation of price. It said that. They knew that opposite.

The people of Ontario are watching, shaking their heads, wondering, "Is it just everybody who is incompetent over there?" Or are they trying to say that a few people, the new energy minister or the new Premier, didn't know things when they should know them?

This is a complete mess, and every single word in this bill is about the things this government wasn't prepared to do in the first place: the lack of consumer protection, the way they were going to get rid of the hydro corridors, the way they weren't going to control what happened in terms of the running of Hydro One and so on. But it all adds up to a lack of courage on the part of the backbench over there. They aren't prepared, even after being caught at it—even after having condoned this deal at the Albany Club, they still won't sit down on their cabinet, on their Premier and say, "You've got to make a decision here. You've got to make it in this House."

To have the member from Scarborough say that we depend on the wisdom of the members of this House absolutely undermines the credibility of this government caucus, because they went out of here in December without any reference to this House whatsoever, and they were going to sell off the whole shebang, the hydro corridors, the hefty pensions and so on. They knew that somewhere in the bowels of the Albany Club all this was happening and now what we have is just the cover-up, the mess. They have their hands stuck in the socket and, quite frankly, it looks very good on the government.

Mr Maves: I want to commend the member for Toronto-Danforth. Of all the opposition people who have spoken to the bill today, she's the first one who actually said something about the bill, so I commend her for that. But I have to tell you that every other member, including the member who just sat down and including Mr Colle for Eglinton-Lawrence, who feign all this great concern about the end of debate, has still failed to talk about the bill.

The member for Eglinton-Lawrence got up and talked about rip-offs and basically humiliated and condemned every person who has ever gone door-to-door to sell anything. He did talk about a problem. There are people who rip people off and they do it on door-to-door sales.

But in the bill is the energy consumers' bill of rights. The bill substantially wants to fix, and help consumers with, the problem of predatory and unscrupulous door-to-

door salespeople. They're not all like that, but this specifically aims to deal with that.

I guess the Liberals are opposed to dealing with that because they're opposed to the bill going forward. It's remarkable. I can't get over how they continue to say they're all upset about closure of debate, when it's 5 minutes to 6 and none of them has even mentioned the bill. They obviously have nothing to say about the bill and there's obviously no sense in continuing to go on and on with debate.

It's remarkable that they are opposed to the consumer protection that's in the bill. It is absolutely remarkable. Of course, it's also absolutely remarkable that they complain about some of the Hydro One contracts but are holding up the government from doing something about it.

Mr Phillips: —one is an embarrassment to the people of Ontario. We were told the government was heading in one direction. They didn't even get the legislation right. And now we find that the hand-picked board by the government, the hand-picked board of directors, hand-picked by the government when Mr Eves was the Deputy Premier, that gave the board direction, that knew every step of the way what was happening, that knew every step of the way about these outrageous payments to the chief executive officer, knew all about that—the board has told us they kept the government informed every step of the way. Now we find that the government is trying to say they knew nothing. Mr Wilson contradicts that. Mr Wilson, the Minister of Energy, 18 months ago said that the board was proposing these salaries that he found abhorrent, and every time he raised it, it got worse.

Well, I say to the people of Ontario, what happened? Why didn't Mr Wilson, who was supposed to be there representing the taxpayers, send a letter, meet with them? He said he met with them frequently. Where's the evidence of the steps the government took? So far we have only one piece of communication, dated last week. The only reason the government acted was because they got caught. The board, every step of the way, did what they thought, and then the government got caught. Nothing happened until last week—the only correspondence we've seen at all from the government. There's where the blame lay. The Hydro charade.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Toronto-Danforth has two minutes to respond.

Ms Churley: I would say to the member for Niagara Falls that I had a lot more things to say about this bill, but my time is up and I won't have another opportunity.

Let me tell you one of these other things I wanted to talk about in more detail, and that is this: section 50.3 provides for all proceeds to go to the debt "less any amount that the Minister of Finance considers advisable in connection with the acquisition of such securities, debt obligations or interest, including the amount of the purchase price, any obligations assumed and any other costs incurred by her Majesty in right of Ontario." As well, "costs incurred ... in disposing of the securities" etc—those kinds of things would also be included.

It's possible, when you start reading these caveats in here, that it leaves the Minister of Finance with considerable discretion to grab a large proportion of this money, raised through the sale or any other arrangement such as the creation of a non-profit. The government has cited the \$4-billion government equity in Hydro One as the amount that would be deducted and put into general revenues. But this section appears to allow them to take even more than that out.

So when the government comes and talks its rhetoric about doing this and every red cent going into paying down the debt, it is disingenuous at best. I would say to

all members in the House that if it were the NDP in power or the Liberals in power and there was such a monumental scandal going on in terms of the salaries and what the government knew and didn't act on the behaviour now, the Tories would be over here screaming for heads to roll and cabinet resignations. I believe that would be in order for this government.

The Acting Speaker: It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until a quarter to 7, or 6:45 if you're on a digital.

*The House adjourned at 1759.
Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

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**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 37^e législature

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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 6 June 2002

Jeudi 6 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 6 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 6 juin 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING CODE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2002 LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CODE DU BÂTIMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 3, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement / Projet de loi 124, Loi visant à améliorer la sécurité publique et à accroître l'efficacité dans l'exécution du code du bâtiment.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Trinity-Spadina had the floor.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I would like to ask for unanimous consent, and I understand there was agreement in the House leaders' meeting, to stand down the leadoff that my colleague Michael Prue has commenced and that that debate continue in rotation.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. We're in a good mood. So we're now over to the government side.

Further debate? The member for Hamilton East.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I'm pleased to stand and speak to this bill. On the surface, when you look at the bill, like much of the legislation this government has brought in since it has been in power, it looks like one of these good-news bills. They talk about efficiency; they talk about ensuring that there is a more efficient way for building permits to go ahead. We've heard the argument over and over, whether it's privatization of jails, whether it's when they privatized the inspection of amusement rides and took that out of the control of the government and gave it to their friends in the private sector—there's a lengthy list of this government's ability over the years to be able to simply wrap it up under this guise of quicker, more efficient, faster, and then what it ultimately ends up becoming is less regulation, less control, less safety. It goes on and on in every area you talk about.

We all believe that if there's a way of streamlining the building process and the building permit process in a safe manner, then we would certainly look at that. But what

this does is go much beyond that. To some degree, it's from downloading on to the municipal sector. To some degree it is basically getting government out of the hands of city hall and the municipalities, being able to control their building process and being able to enforce the building code here in the province of Ontario.

This bill doesn't really amend the building code. It's an overhaul of the code as enforced. Just as I said, as the government has done with driver testing, elevators and amusement rides, Bill 124 privatizes the inspection and enforcement of important public safety laws. Currently, as you know, the building code is primarily enforced by the municipalities, but some counties, boards of health and planning boards also enforce the code. Each of these has the power to appoint a chief building official, and inspectors have the power and duty to inspect, issue orders and enforce the code.

All of a sudden, with Bill 124 this government is going to allow something they call registered code agencies, or RCAs, as I'll continue to refer to them. It reminds me of the old megaphone thing with the big dog standing next to it—just as a kid, Mr Speaker, of course; you probably remember better than I would. Municipalities will have the power to authorize one of these agencies to inspect, issue permits and enforce the code. These agencies must be registered with the province and meet a set of qualifications. The qualifications will be determined later by regulation.

Again, the devil is in the details. They're saying to us, "Trust us, because we will develop the type of regulations that will be good, the type of regulations that will be stringent and will allow better processing and enforcement of the building code."

Frankly, we have seen that when you give this government the power, a blank cheque, to set standards by the process of regulations, generally they side with their corporate friends; generally they side with downloading to municipalities; generally they side with simply trying to do it as quickly as possible for their friends in the development industry and not necessarily be concerned with public safety.

1850

Some municipalities have questioned whether local taxpayers will be on the hook if the privatized building inspectors should make a mistake. It's a private company hired by the municipalities. There's a risk involved in that. Bill 124 defines who is liable for what, from design of the building to inspection, and gives uniformity to the liability provision. The bill also ensures that liability remains with whichever body, municipality or registered

code agency signs off. This bill requires building designers to have liability insurance.

What this bill also does is force municipalities to only collect permit fees that reflect the cost of service delivery; issue an annual report that lists permit fees and inspection codes; hold a public meeting before changing building permit fees; establish a code of conduct for building inspectors. This all sounds wonderful. It would be great if the government applied many of these principles to their own standards and practices here at Queens Park. They would also have to approve building plans in a strict time frame, which, again, will be set out by regulation.

When I look at this bill, it certainly leaves a lot to be desired. If there were some changes made to it, there are some parts of it that I think are supportable. But the way this government has done it now, it seems to me that it is not supportable. Many of the concerns that have been raised by my colleagues previously are very serious concerns. I think there are a number of amendments that we would make to this legislation if it gets to committee, as the government hopefully will take it there.

We agree that steps need to be taken to improve the timelines. I believe we need to go to municipalities across the province. There are municipalities right across Ontario where building permits are issued in a timely fashion. Part of the problem has been the downloading that has occurred by this government. The downloading in itself has forced municipalities to cut back in many areas, in many of the front-line services they provide. Building departments often are under a great deal of pressure. You have a situation in some areas of the province where there is tremendous growth occurring. However, the municipalities have been forced, as a result of downloading, to cut back the staffing in many of those areas.

As that occurs, we're going to continue to see a delay, which government is using as its excuse now, in those permits being issued. So it really isn't the municipalities' fault; it is the fault of this government for, over the last seven years, continuously downloading to municipalities services that should have been done at the provincial level, reducing the transfer payments to municipalities and shortchanging the grants that are occurring. As we see this happening, that is one of the reasons why we end up with the type of delays this bill pretends to try to fix.

As we look at what is behind this, is it really an effort to improve the processing of applications and the building code or is it an effort by this government to force municipalities to privatize service that is handled—and let me say, I think handled very well. I know in my time on city council the building department, the city building inspectors, were first-class professionals who did a great job, who had tremendous experience, tremendous qualifications. They developed relationships with the people they were working with, often in order to avoid problems. Situations would not have to get to the point where a charge would be laid, because those folks had been around a while. They knew what they were doing and developed relationships with the builders and the devel-

opers, and as that continued to happen, problems were somewhat eliminated. I don't think you're going to see this when you have the private sector involved in this. This is really another example of this government believing that simply privatizing is the way to go.

We saw it with the 407. They promised it was going to be a great deal for the people of Ontario when they turned it over to their friends in the private sector. This steal, the 99-year lease, has been an absolute gold mine for the owners of this company. We were told by this government when they privatized the highway that they were going to be able to control rates. They were going to ensure that taxpayers, consumers and drivers on that road were not being gouged. We saw the result of what happened with the 407. We saw the outrageous increases and the loopholes this government allowed to occur in the contract. That was all under the guise of privatization.

The government has not yet released that contract. Bits and pieces of it have been released through freedom of information but this government still has not released that contract. We were told, "Don't worry about it. Everything is fine. We'll look after the public interest." Well, we've seen how they looked after the public interest with the 407. Now they want us to believe they are somehow going to look after the public interest with this piece of legislation.

As I talk about privatization and this government's obsession with privatization, I look at how they are handling Hydro One and that whole privatization process. A couple of years ago they started down this road and said, "Trust us. We'll do it right. We'll take care of it and there won't be any problems." We have seen an absolute disaster in the last few months. We have seen a government that has lost control of an agenda. We have seen a government that has lost total control of Hydro One. We have seen a minister who decided, three weeks after he found out, that he was going to tell the Premier there was a problem. We've seen a former minister who said, "I was trying to rein them in but I couldn't," because the minister felt he didn't have the power to do it. So we've seen a government in chaos since Premier Eves has come to power. Basically the government has been paralysed by Hydro One and their handling of that. So we end up, again, with another example of the privatization agenda of this government.

There are some things the private sector obviously should do. There is always room for partnerships. We have said that in the past. However, there are some areas where I believe public safety is important, is essential.

The jails are another example of that. We've seen the privatization of the superjail. I'm sure if this government had their way, they would privatize every jail across Ontario. They would get rid of the first-class, professional correctional officers we have in place who do a great job and risk their lives every single day protecting the public and protecting the inmates. They would probably prefer that these superjails or these private jails would be sold off to their American friends, who would then hire lower-paid, less trained, less professional

individuals because the bottom line would be the profit margin, not necessarily ensuring public safety, as our jails and our first-class correctional officers do today. So that seems to be another great example of an experiment in privatization where this government is jeopardizing public safety at the expense of simply helping their corporate friends and their corporate agenda at whatever cost, regardless of who it hurts or who gets trampled along the way.

There really is nothing this government will not look at and try to privatize if they can do it and get away with it. They've talked about privatizing the LCBO. It makes a tonne of money for this government, but they talk about it time and time again. They talked about it in their 1999 campaign; they talked about it during the leadership campaign. Some liked it—

Interjection.

Mr Agostino: Mr Mazzilli is talking to me about the LCBO. I'll just leave it at that. He's complaining because his credit card is maxed out, like it's my fault, like I was out there drinking.

As we continue down this blind path and obsession that this government has with privatization, I think there are a number of dangers. This bill, to me, does have a number of risks. It doesn't have enough detail, frankly. It does not spell out clearly the qualifications that these companies or the inspectors are to have. Are they simply going to take the municipal building inspectors and say, "Come and join us in the private sector. We'll pay you half the money we're paying you now to do the same job"? Remember, at the end of the day, the municipalities and the building inspectors are responsible to the commissioners in their departments. They are also responsible to the city managers and to the city council. There certainly is a direct line of accountability.

When I was on city council and someone had a problem with a building inspector, they would pick up the phone and call me or the councillor in their own area, whatever area that might be. It was easy for me to pick up the phone and call the department head, the manager, the commissioner or the building inspector directly and try to straighten out that problem. How do you do that with a private company? How do you do that with a private company that's removed from the control of city council or the city manager? It's a question of accountability. Who are they accountable to? At the end of the day, these private inspectors who work for these private firms are accountable to shareholders, to the bottom line. So if you have to cut corners to reach that, you will do that; if they have to hire fewer inspectors, and instead of an hour, they spend half an hour doing an inspection, they'll do that, because the bottom line is really what it's all about.

1900

These companies are not into this to provide a public service or goodwill. They don't say, "Gee whiz, let's get into the business of being building code inspectors. We'll do it as a public service, as goodwill to provide service to our community." Of course not; that's ridiculous. The

companies are there to make money, which they should be, for the shareholders they are accountable to. Ultimately, as you cut corners, particularly in something as important as the building code, it's really a question of public health and public safety that is at stake. As you cut corners you end up, in a sense, jeopardizing public safety. But it doesn't really seem to matter with this government.

This is not an anti-developer rant. I know that developers would like this. Developers don't necessarily want private inspectors. What developers want is a process where applications get approved quicker. If this government had not moved toward downloading services to the municipal level, toward taking the opportunity from municipalities to properly staff and fund building departments and have adequate staffing in place, that would occur. But now, because there are fewer people to do the job, delays are occurring.

I don't think developers are out there saying, "Let's have private inspectors." If you spoke to most developers today in Ontario, they would tell you they're extremely pleased with building departments and inspectors throughout the province. It is not a question of their competence; it's not a question of how they're doing their job. It's simply a question of the time it takes in some areas—and let me suggest to you that this is not across the province of Ontario. Yes, there are pockets where there are some problems; yes, there are pockets where there are extensive delays. But there are a lot of communities where it's not happening. So I'm not really sure what is driving this. If it is the development industry, there are ways of fixing this without going this route. If it is simply an effort to privatize, then that is the agenda at stake here and not necessarily a better way of doing service.

I'm surprised, if this government is sincere about this, that the standards these inspectors are to meet are not outlined in the bill. Are they going to be later? There are no standards, there are no regulations, there are no qualifications. None of those areas are in the bill.

Today, building inspectors who get hired by municipalities must meet certain standards, must have a certain educational background, must meet certain qualifications. There are criteria in place.

Interjection.

Mr Agostino: That does not happen. Municipalities don't just hire building inspectors out of an employment line.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Yes, they do.

Mr Agostino: Well, maybe in the municipality you're in, but it doesn't happen that way in the municipality I'm in.

Interjections.

Mr Agostino: I find it interesting that this bill is so important to this government that they had their chance to speak for 20 minutes and not one member on that side could stand up and defend the bill. Either they're not interested or they don't care or it's not that important a bill for them. Mr Klees says he spoke. There are six or

eight other members sitting across the floor. I hope they will take their 20 minutes. If it's that important a bill to the government—they keep engaging in heckling—I would hope the members—

Interjections.

Mr Agostino: Mr Mazzilli is heckling again. I hope he will get up to speak on this bill and use 20 minutes or 40 minutes or whatever time is necessary so he can help his colleagues. Mr Klees is upset because his colleagues won't get up and help him and speak, and Mr Klees has to carry the can for the whole caucus. I know Frank is a very capable member, but I'm not quite sure he can carry 53 members.

Interjection.

Mr Agostino: Yes, use that endorsement. Coming from me, it will really help your campaign.

In all seriousness, there are some issues that need to be addressed; there's no question about it. I think we all strive to ensure that we do everything we can to help development and building, because all of us understand that the construction industry, the development industry, is extremely important. If that goes, the rest of the economy goes. We have seen patterns wherever you look—in any region, any municipality, any jurisdiction—that often housing starts, building starts are a very fair indication of the state of the economy, of the growth in that region, that city or that area, of the ability of their economy to roll. We understand that. It is extremely important.

Interjection.

Mr Agostino: There's Mr Mazzilli again. When I sit down, I will move for unanimous consent to give Mr Mazzilli an hour to speak to this bill, because right now he seems so interested in heckling and he continues to heckle.

We can't support this bill as it is. We certainly will be making some amendments at committee. We think it's important that if this type of bill does get put through, there have to be some standards and regulations put in place, and we want to see those regulations before the bill is finally passed. But as it is now, what is in front of us is simply a blind effort to privatize another service, and I can't support it.

Before I sit down, I would like to move for unanimous consent that Mr Mazzilli, the member for London-Fanshawe, be given an hour to speak on the merits of this bill on behalf of the government.

Mr Klees: No.

Mr Agostino: His own colleagues have said no. Why is that a surprise?

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard a lot of nos.

It is now time for questions and comments.

Mr Marchese: I support the comments made by the member for Hamilton East.

Mr Klees: You weren't listening to him.

Mr Marchese: Oh, please, Frank, of course I was. He's right here.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): He wasn't listening to Chris.

Mr Marchese: I wasn't listening to Chris. Camera, over here; focus on Chris.

We've got some concerns, Chris.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): You do?

Mr Marchese: Yes. And the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has concerns too. That's why they want hearings, obviously, to come and raise their concerns with you. Hopefully you might listen to them, because most of these people are Tories by legal profession. I love it when the Association of Municipalities of Ontario comes to talk to you guys, because this is one group I know you're going to listen to. So we're going to be calling for hearings in order to get people like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to come and give us their views. Hopefully they'll comment on issues of downloading provincial responsibilities on to the cities. Boy, you people have whacked those people so unbelievably, day in and day out, to the extent that these municipalities don't have the money to do what they've got to do.

So here you come with building code changes in order to help the municipalities. You want to make it easier for them to build, don't you? The idea is that we want to privatize those services and contract them out, don't we, because it will be cheaper and faster? Right? The point is, if you funded the municipalities adequately, they would have enough money to do the job they're supposed to. But if they don't have the money, they're going to have to contract out, privatize the services, which is what this is all about. That's what this is all about.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): This has been very entertaining this evening. I just wanted to make a quick comment. First of all, it's very interesting to listen to the member for Hamilton East, Mr Agostino, and his comments. I really wonder where he stands on privatization, because his whole speech was about privatization.

They support the privatization of power generation. That's a fact. We know that.

Mr Klees: Depending on the day.

Mr Dunlop: Depending what day it is, we think they support privatization of power generation, but everything else they hate. They hate the private sector. They hate the private sector that builds roads and cars. They hate the small business community of Ontario. I can't really understand where they come from.

One of the comments he made—he talked for a few minutes about the privatization of jails. In Ontario right now, we've got a brand-new facility that just opened up in my riding, the Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene. There's another one exactly the same being built in Lindsay right now. They are identical facilities. One will be operated by the private sector, the Management and Training Corp of Canada, an American-based company; the other will be run by the provincial civil service. We've got a five-year contract with MTC. I think it's an opportunity, particularly when I've got 300 new jobs for my community. The economic spinoff in the community is \$30 million a year. As well,

the Management and Training Corp, the operator of the facility, buys everything locally. It's not bought through central dispatch or the central purchasing agent.

1910

I'm very proud of this facility. The best thing about it is that after five years we'll be able to compare identical facilities, private and public, the recidivism rates and the cost of operation.

It's a pleasure to speak here tonight.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): It's a great pleasure to have a chance to follow and offer some comments on the excellent presentation made by my colleague the member from Hamilton East.

The squeaky stone over there, the member for Etobicoke North, chooses in his inimitable fashion to contribute to this debate through, not standing in his place and actually speaking when the government has a chance, but badgering my colleague as he gave his presentation on this matter. Luckily the member for Hamilton East is able to withstand the charade of these members opposite.

Interjection.

Mr Smitherman: There's no end to the whine that comes from the stone over there. Fred Flintstone is alive and well and he's living in the Ontario Legislature. "The member from Bedrock" is how he is known around here.

I would say, on the issue of the speech at hand, I noted that the member from Simcoe North stood in his place and sought to—

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Earlier today you made reference to the fact that members shouldn't be hurling personal insults at other members. I think there was one done just now and I would ask you to make a ruling on that.

The Speaker: I didn't hear it.

Mr Smitherman: It was a term of endearment, but if it was offensive, I gladly withdraw it, and I apologize to the member. He wants the floor. Maybe he'll speak if he has the courage. I thought as a fellow Etobicokean it was the least I could do in offering recognition to his constituents, who never know what he's up to, that he was indeed here in the Legislature tonight and contributing in his oh, so helpful way to the quality and content of the debate.

Ms Churley: Just about an hour ago I was standing in this Legislature—I'm sure you were watching it on television, Mr Speaker, every word that we said here—and we were debating at that time the privatization of Hydro One and the generation of our power. It seems that if this government sees a problem with anything, the first thing they do is jump and try to privatize it. Not only that; if there isn't a problem, as there isn't with Hydro One, they decide that because they want to make money off it, they're going to privatize that too. Then, when there isn't chaos, they privatize things to either fix them or to make money off them, and create disruption and chaos in the system, which is exactly what you're doing with Hydro One.

Now we're here tonight debating this bill on building permits. I've got to tell you this is a very complex area,

something we shouldn't fool around with. Building inspectors are dedicated public servants who are well trained and work very hard in our municipalities. They have a very important job to do, and that is to keep our buildings safe.

There's a problem in the system. The government consults and decides, after downloading to the municipalities—and as my friend Mr Prue, our lead on this bill, pointed out, there are spikes. In the summer months, building permits go way up and there are not enough staff to keep on top of them. Then, during the winter, it slows down. There is an issue there.

I know that AMO wants to have more discussions with the government. We need committee hearings and we need extensive consultation on this bill.

The Speaker: Response?

Mr Agostino: I want to thank my colleagues from Trinity-Spadina, Simcoe North, Toronto Centre-Rosedale and Toronto Danforth for their contribution to the debate.

I found it interesting; the member from Simcoe North was talking about Hydro. I always find it fascinating when members across the floor are proud of how they're handling this whole Hydro thing. Think about this. These are the guys who—I remember clearly the morning of May 2, when they were trying to save Ernie Eves's career and Mike Harris's seat, the big, bold headlines: "Hydro Sale Off the Table—Ernie Eves"; the National Post said, "Hydro Off the Table—Ernie Eves." So you go through the by-election. You buy that by-election through this false advertising suggesting that somehow Hydro is off the table. You squeak through one by-election. You have the Premier running in a riding where his margin goes from 18,000 to 3,000 seats. You squeak through that. You use this issue as a wedge issue. Then you turn around a couple of weeks later, and it's business as usual.

You've got a minister who can't handle the stress any more—poor Chris Stockwell; what you guys have put him through. Every day he has to be on his feet trying to defend the Premier, this government and this Hydro file he doesn't believe in. Yesterday, he pulled his best Jack Nicholson imitation, which was quite entertaining, but I'm sure it served absolutely no purpose in the debate.

You're talking to us about dealing with privatization. If that's your example of how to deal with privatization, I'm not going to take any lessons from this government on how to deal with privatization. You have made a mess out of the Hydro file. You have people resigning. You have people getting \$6-million payout packages. The Premier doesn't know when he was told. He says he read it in the paper. The minister tells him he told him a week earlier. The minister says he only found out two weeks after he became minister. Jim Wilson says he tried earlier. What a mess you've made out of that; and you're making the same mess out of this.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Smitherman: The presentation by my friend the member for Hamilton East will be difficult to follow, but I will do my best. Luckily for me, I'll be sharing my time with the esteemed member for Parkdale-High Park.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): You don't have any choices.

Mr Smitherman: I've got a whole bunch more in the back.

For those people who are listening at home, I think it's helpful to try to give you some sense of what's going on at the Ontario Legislature tonight. We have a debate going on where the government refuses to put up members. As is so often the case with these guys, they are happy to have their majority push through initiatives which have the very real prospect of endangering individuals.

I think that's an important starting point for my comments. The government members in their hectoring have attempted to make the point that if you oppose this, you somehow oppose the private sector. That was the attempted line of thought followed by the member for Simcoe North.

I'm very proud to represent a riding which is going through an extraordinary urban renewal. I had an opportunity to participate, when I served as chief of staff to then-Toronto Mayor Barbara Hall in the zoning and eventual construction of what has become known as the Air Canada Centre, a much-revered place among those people who support the Toronto Maple Leafs, as I do.

I think it is possible in this place to both support development, growth and evolution of communities and, on the other hand, to reserve a certain number of roles for public entities. We've seen on this government's part no area of government that they think is beyond private sector involvement. Liberals differ with them on this point. We don't have our heads stuck in the sand, but we do firmly believe that when matters of public health and safety come into play, the roles for public bodies and entities, with their accountability, are enhanced. That's a simple premise for so much of our opposition to the government's attempts to privatize everything that moves.

We heard this defence by the member for Simcoe North regarding the privatization of a jail in his riding. But I think when it comes to the public's concerns in terms of how safe their communities will be, the issue of full-out privatization is a thing of extraordinary concern to Ontarians.

I had an interesting observation—at least, I found it interesting, and I think some others might; probably not those on the other side, but perhaps some people who might be listening at home—and that is that on the heels of the tragic events of September 11 in the United States, a wildfire of a debate took place almost immediately thereafter because a lot of people quickly came to understand that operating services on a lowest-cost basis, in this case airport X-ray machines, was not necessarily viewed to be the best way to protect the health and safety of constituents, in that case Americans and people travelling in the United States. I think that's an important lesson here and it's a lesson that the government is slow to learn.

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There was another study a week or two ago that came out that compared the mortality rate in hospitals in the United States that were run by for-profit entities against hospitals that were run as public entities, where the bottom-line concern was the health and safety of an individual. The care in the public sector was deemed to have been better—that is, there was a lower mortality rate—in those hospitals that were operated without the need to make a profit. I think that's a very important lesson that we need to learn.

But it should come as no surprise that a government that has a cash machine over there in the form of their PC fund that mirrors the capacities of George W. Bush to raise—

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know it's a requirement that members speak to the bill that's on the floor, Bill 124. Airport screening devices and what's going on in hospitals are not part of the bill. The bill is about building permits and how—

The Speaker: I thank the member. Yes, I heard the member speaking about working at Air Canada Centre and the zoning and so on just a few moments ago.

The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, and I'm sure he'll keep to the topic.

Mr Smitherman: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was keeping to the bill, because the essence of this bill is the government's mentality in terms of privatizing just about any service they can find.

I find it interesting that the member for Mississauga South would stand and interrupt me because I was a little bit on her nerves, but she won't stand in this place and debate on this matter tonight. I find that a bit interesting. You will see as the night goes on that they're not going to do that. It shouldn't surprise us.

Mrs Marland: I'm in favour of the bill.

Mr Smitherman: The member shouts out that she's in favour of the bill, and I recognize of course that she is, but I think it's important to recognize as well that this is a government whose agenda has revolved around the issue of privatization. And at its essence, what does that mean? It means taking services which are provided by individuals who are working in the public service and then turning them over to organizations that operate on a for-profit basis. I think we need to be clear that where matters of health and safety come into play, that's not a helpful thing.

I think it helps to shape the attitude that the public must see from this government around Hydro One. The minister of everything, from my home riding of Etobicoke Centre, likes to go on like he's some sort of hero for having stopped in their tracks, rather belatedly, the Hydro One board. But the same principle applies here. You see all these people and say, "Well, these salaries are not out of line," in an attempt to justify them against other entities in the private sector. But the fact of the matter is that when we go full tilt toward the privatization of services, things change.

So we've got Manitoba Hydro, Quebec Hydro, where the people who run them make around a half a million bucks a year, and then we've got the entities of Ontario Hydro, where if you don't make a couple of million bucks a year, you obviously haven't done a good job negotiating with Chris Stockwell. So I think it's an important principle to remind the government of.

On the basis of safety, I think we need to view this as well in a post-Walkerton environment. What do we learn from all of the work that Justice O'Connor did in his fine report? I guess we see there's lots of blame and plenty to go around, but more importantly I think he helps us in a way. He gives us a lot of wisdom and guides us toward a circumstance where Ontarians can be surer of the services they're receiving—the services that are being provided by their governments—and there is an expectation of governments that is different.

I hear so often that people just want to see governments operate more like a business. In that sense I think they're speaking to ensure that governments work in an efficient way, that they're mindful of the taxpayers' dollar. But adherents of neo-conservative values, which are plentiful on the other side, take that to mean that government must operate without a heart, always focused on the bottom line without a view toward really establishing those services that are essential to people, to their quality of life and, in many cases, to their actual capacity to live life to the fullest of their capabilities. That's where we get hung up all the time by these guys across the way, because they operate with a fundamental disrespect for the public service. I think that's been so obvious in their treatment of so many different groups, from Harris's talk about Hula Hoops to describe nurses who fled our province, and now we wish we had them back—it has been an agenda of disrespect as it relates to public services, and I think it's shameful that we see one more instance of this coming so close on the heels of the report on Walkerton.

I want to say with respect to this bill that we always look for opportunities to enhance it and improve it. That is our responsibility. I note that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has also come up with 33 changes, recommendations that the government should take into consideration to enhance the quality of this bill.

I think there's another theme runs through this, and it's the way these guys on the other side operate as it relates to our municipalities. I note that one of the things they say, in terms of the rules that will come out with respect to building permits and inspections, is that municipalities will be forced only to collect permit fees that reflect the cost of service delivery. As someone who had the opportunity in the last six months to purchase a home, we'd look at the land transfer tax as a very interesting comparative to this regulation that the government imposes on the tax base of the property taxpayer in my city, as an example, who is dramatically burdened by an inadequacy of government support.

Hon Mr Stockwell: What about the land transfer tax?

Mr Smitherman: The minister wants to heckle, but he won't stand up and speak. I find that to be an interesting circumstance. But I would say it's nice to see him here.

I think that one of the things we've got to be conscious of is the capacity of our building departments to do an adequate job of assisting people in their move toward whatever development might be occurring. I believe it was the member for Toronto-Danforth who spoke a little while ago about the peaks and valleys, the ebbs and flows that occur in those processes. When I worked at the city of Toronto, we found ways to adapt to make sure we were better able to serve the needs of individuals, and we put on permit hours in the evenings and on Saturdays. This is an example of the way government and the public service can, if the values are properly instilled by the leadership, do a better job of mimicking what some might say are more the principles of the private sector.

I think that one of the things we fail to exhaust is taking full advantage of the capacities of the people who staff our various government services. We allow them to stagnate, and we don't encourage enough of what I might call creative spirit to make sure the services that individuals are providing to constituents are done in a fashion that works for individuals. I think we can all be participants in eviscerating the perception that government can only operate from 8:30 to 4:30. If there are certain things in the private sector that are worth mimicking without introducing the notion of profit and the bottom line, we should be looking for opportunities to do those.

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One of the other things that concerns us quite a bit is the capacity of individual builders to appoint their own inspectors. We need to make sure the public is protected at all turns by ensuring that building inspectors do an adequate job.

At the base of Blue Mountain in Collingwood, adjacent to Monterra, which is a pretty nice golf course, is a townhouse development, maybe a couple of hundred units, that was shabbily constructed. It was not properly inspected and has subsequently been condemned, notwithstanding the fact that it's not particularly old. This reminds us that these services are essential and that they provide a quality of life and safety to people who depend on them. Many times, defects can be hidden by a piece of drywall slapped up here or there. We're depending on these people to be experienced and able to assist in ensuring the long-term viability of a dwelling or what have you.

I think what we have here on the part of the government is one more blind attempt to diminish the role of the public sector at the expense of the capacity of government to adequately respond when the need arises. This bill is one more in a series which, taken in their full, lead us to such a dramatically diminished role for government that comes at the expense of quality of life for individuals.

I talked a little bit earlier about the circumstances in the United States where, as soon as a problem arises, political expediency dictates that you start playing the blame game. No one has done that more effectively than the Minister of Energy, who graces us with his presence tonight. It is as if they operate over there with a little thing on their desk that they spin to see who to point blame at, and it never turns toward them. But in the days following 9/11, people looked and said, "What are the circumstances, what can we do, where can we look to enhance our protection?" They looked not to the private sector; they looked to their government agencies and to their leaders in government. At that time, because of the same kind of rampant privatization fever that is spreading throughout Mike Harris's and Ernie Eves's Ontario, they looked to find a place where they could gain comfort again, and they looked to the public sector. They didn't look to the private sector in that instance.

We saw, in the damage-control mode of this government in the days following the difficulties that resulted in Walkerton, that the government did move to try to regain some public trust and confidence. I don't say this as a criticism; we called upon them, and we continue to call, for enhanced enforcement and for more inspectors. We saw in the days following Walkerton, when it became clear that the Ministry of the Environment was not up to capacity in terms of being able to properly manage systems, that the government acted. How did it act? How did it act to restore public trust? It did it through enhanced public service.

To anyone who's looking in, I think it's very important to frame what's going on with this bill and with the trend on the part of that government to privatize everything that walks—when push comes to shove, when the problems happen, governments are expected by their public to restore public confidence. They do that not through further privatization, not through further contracting out, but typically they respond with an enhancement to the existing public service. Is that what we are likely to encounter here? I think it's quite possible. In Ontario perhaps we don't hear a lot about the crises that come about through shoddy workmanship and construction, but we only need to look at a reasonably sophisticated jurisdiction called British Columbia, in particular the thousands of condominium owners in Vancouver who are experiencing tremendous problems as a result of shoddy construction and obviously some failures in terms of the capacities of the building inspectors.

If I'm a public official and I have difficulty with a property, I'm going to be expected to find a public service answer in terms of restoring public confidence and trust, keeping in mind that when we're talking about buildings, we're talking about dwellings where we live. We're talking about the safety of our loved ones. We're talking about the structural capacities of buildings to support the use for which they are intended. We're talking about making sure the adequate safety provisions have been built in.

For me, as I round the last turn and head toward home, I think this is the way this debate needs to be framed.

People looking in need to remind themselves that this government's rampant desire to privatize everything that walks, to take it from the public sector and turn it over to their buddies in the for-profit world, has resulted in people being put at risk. That's the agenda that you have. We hear all the time about Ernie Eves pivoting and how he's a different kind of guy. It's the biggest load of BS you could ever see, and this bill is further proof that the privatization agenda is alive and well in Chris Stockwell and Ernie Eves's Ontario.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Marchese: I want to congratulate the member from Toronto Centre-Rosedale on his speech. He's not feeling well today, but he's here doing his duty. He's here doing his 20 minutes to respond to a bill that I would presume Tories would want to speak to. Here you have a member who's not feeling well, wanting to have his time to raise issues of concern to the public as it relates to this bill, and we've got Conservatives here who—how many are there? Twelve. That's 12 members and they're not standing up to give their say.

Ms Churley: There are 15 here.

Mr Marchese: There are 15? I just counted 12.

What I want from you, because it's a short little bill—I don't think you have prepared speeches today on this bill; I'm convinced of it. Just tell us what you think. Spend your 20 minutes telling the public why you are so good as a party, why you people are so efficient as managers, why it is that you people love to privatize. Tell the public. Most of you are on this camera, I suspect. Tell them. Twenty minutes is all it takes to defend your views. The member from Toronto Centre-Rosedale came here to tell you, "Look, privatizing has its dangers," and he reminds you about Walkerton, which none of you people want to talk about, because nothing that you did caused the problems in Walkerton, of course. But he does remind you, as we will, that Walkerton was a serious tragedy and that privatizing services of any kind brings in risks and sometimes dangers, and sometimes death. The building code connects to that sort of issue and all I want to do is praise him for taking the 20 minutes to do so.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I want to get up and congratulate my colleague from Toronto Centre-Rosedale for his comments. He pointed out that there are many laudable things about the bill. However, there are a lot of concerns, particularly section 4.2 of the bill, the notion of private registered code agencies. Here's how it would work: I am a builder, I choose my inspection group who's going to be looking at it. Whom do they report to? They report to me, as the builder. They don't have a duty to public safety.

The other thing that has to be remembered, of course, is that I file the plans, the drawings, with the municipality. I have the liability of it. That's fine. What happens if I go out of business as a code agency? To whom does the consumer go? There's nobody who carries any insurance. In fact, this has happened in many jurisdictions.

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I see my good friend Mr Coburn, who is a parliamentary assistant. When they did the BRRAG report,

they looked at these kinds of things. Registered code agencies—the self-selection, private code agencies—were not a part of the BRRAG report that Minister Coburn shepherded through the consultation process.

There is one other area, and I know my colleague wanted to touch on it but he didn't have the time. Maybe he'll respond to it. In the original BRRAG report, they recommended a 10-year insurance carriage for all of the member groups, yet this piece of legislation only requires insurance to be carried for seven years. Maybe my colleague from Toronto Centre-Rosedale will want to comment on that, because the liabilities are very big. The liabilities could be very expensive. Major deficiencies oftentimes do not show up for 10 or 15 years or even longer periods of time. This is something that maybe my colleague would want to comment on, because it's a very integral and important part of this bill.

Ms Churley: I listened with interest to the speech by the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. I've got to say to the member for Don Valley East that I did not hear the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale say one good thing about this bill. He must have thought he was listening to a Tory. But I've got to tell the member for Don Valley East that we haven't heard from any Tories tonight about this bill. We haven't heard their views on the bill. I think somebody stood up on a two-minute, and the member for Mississauga South stood up to actually intervene and interrupt the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. Incredibly, when he was talking about public safety and how it relates to this bill and how it's a very important aspect of this bill, the member for Mississauga got up and at great length told the Speaker that he wasn't speaking to the subject, which makes me wonder if the government members sitting here tonight even know which bill is before us.

I will be speaking to this bill in a few minutes and I will be outlining tonight for the benefit of the members what this bill is about and what the concerns are. These are very real concerns that the members should listen to. We want to make sure that AMO has an opportunity to speak to this bill again. They've made it clear that they want that opportunity. We believe that this important bill has enough major flaws and problems associated with it to be sent out to committee for extensive hearings so that we can guarantee that the bill is amended to deal with the issues that we are telling the government about today. So even though they're not getting up to tell us why they're supporting the bill, which I assume they are, but I don't know, they should be listening carefully to the reasoning of the opposition tonight as to why we should send it out for public hearings.

Mr Agostino: I'm going to have to read Hansard just to become familiar with the laudable points that my colleague from Toronto Centre-Rosedale has made. I was watching upstairs. It must have been the delay in the timing of the television that forced me to miss that. But certainly I think my colleague spoke very clearly and strongly as to the weaknesses in this bill and why this bill is another poor piece of Tory legislation, why this bill is

dangerous to Ontarians, why it's not in the best interests of public health and safety.

The good folks who are watching at home right now must be wondering why this bill is in front of us, because as of tonight they have not yet heard from anyone on the government side of the House—you've got a bunch of ministers, parliamentary assistants, backbenchers here—

Mr Caplan: Former ministers.

Mr Agostino: Former ministers. You've got the whole collection here, but not one of them has the courage to stand up and defend this piece of legislation. You've got to ask yourself why. If this is such a good piece of legislation, if this is wonderful, if this is going to fix the problems with the building code and the delays and everything else that they claim this is going to do, I guess the people at home must be asking the same question: why is no one on the government side of the House willing to get up and defend this bill? Maybe because it's indefensible. Maybe because it's going to be a real stretch for them to find anything good to say about this piece of legislation.

I find that astonishing; I really do. As you follow this debate tonight, you would think that this Legislature is overwhelmingly going to reject this bill. Of course, that's not the case. Because they have a majority, they're all going to blindly vote the same way, as they've been told. They've been given their marching orders by the Premier's office and they're all, en masse, going to support this piece of legislation. But I hope to God, before this debate is over tonight, that one of you will get up and tell us why it's a good piece of legislation.

The Speaker: Response?

Mr Smitherman: Only two minutes? It seems unfair.

I want to say to the members for Trinity-Spadina and Toronto-Danforth and Hamilton East, thank you. And I want to say to my friend from Don Valley East that it must be my cheery, sunny disposition that sent him the waves to highlight all the laudable aspects of the bill that he referred to. I do think that having a lot of certainty around the way we inspect the buildings is an important goal.

I mentioned at the top of my speech that in my riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, a pretty dense urban environment, and the member from Trinity-Spadina can speak to this very effectively as well, we're going through an amazing urban renaissance. Thousands and thousands of new units are being built—not rental accommodation, before you try to pretend that Al Leach was right, because he wasn't—all along the lake and in my riding, in Yorkville, at Sherbourne and Richmond. New neighbourhoods are emerging. New life is being given to neighbourhoods that in other cities are derelict. I just want to say that having a good system of building inspections, of having permits approved in a timely fashion, are critically important things. These are critically important responsibilities that people look to their governments to provide. I think that at the end of the day, on matters that involve the health and safety of individuals, I'm inclined to stand on the side of those who

deliver service without a view toward its profitability. There are lots of appropriate places in the marketplace for profit to be, but when it comes to the health and safety of Ontarians, we should reject the government's privatization agenda on this matter.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Churley: It really is my pleasure to be here in this House tonight—

Interjection: And duty.

Ms Churley: —and my duty. Yes, I am on duty tonight. But it is my pleasure to be here at almost 7:50 on a Thursday night. I do have a lot of things on my plate these days. I'm very busy. As everybody knows, Alexa McDonough announced that she's stepping down as leader of the federal NDP as of yesterday and my friend and ward mate, Jack Layton, is considering it, thinking about it. I'm urging him to run as the leader and I'm there supporting him to do that.

Applause.

Ms Churley: Thank you. I'll tell Mr Layton that all the members here tonight are urging him to run as well. But the reason I brought up Mr Layton tonight is that, as you know, Mr Layton is a member of Toronto city council and he has great concerns about this bill. He wanted me to relate that to you tonight and to let you know that as a long-time member of city council for the city of Toronto, in my area of Toronto-Danforth and his ward we have some serious concerns about this bill. And here I am tonight, having what I thought was going to be a spirited debate. I mean, Chris Stockwell is here, all kinds of people are here who'd like to get up and yell and scream and get the debate going, and they're sitting silently tonight. What's going on here? The government members are just sitting here.

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We have a very important bill before us and they're not getting up and defending their position. They're not getting up and telling us, the opposition, the NDP, who have some serious problems with this bill and its impact on safety, why they support it or what they are saying to AMO, who have expressed concerns about the bill and want more input. They're not telling us whether they're going to allow committee hearings, which we are calling for because this bill badly needs some amendments and more input. They're just sitting there quietly.

I'm sure they're listening to every word and taking notes so that afterwards they can go back, as they always do when the opposition tells them their problems with certain bills—they always listen, of course, and they go away and they make amendments.

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre): I'll go and get my notes and I'll be back.

Ms Churley: Yes, right. There goes one now to make those amendments.

I'm really disappointed tonight that we are not hearing from the government members to get their views on why they support the bill. This is my first opportunity in this House to talk to this bill and to actually hear from the government their reasoning as to why they think this is a

good bill. I'm still hoping that one or two of them will get up and do that.

We take safety for granted most of the time, until something terrible happens, until something bad happens. We used to take our water for granted: get up, turn on the tap, take a drink of water and we'd be fine. Suddenly, and this is all related, this is about public safety and public services and the building code and the inspectors who look at the applications and sometimes very complex issues in a building application. This is a safety issue, primarily, that we're talking about here tonight, as was the situation in Walkerton. We take it for granted, when we turn on our water—or used to; we don't any more—that we're going to be safe when we drink that water. We take it for granted, when we eat the food we buy in the grocery stores, that we're going to be OK when we eat that food. Recently, as everybody here knows, there has been tainted food, E coli in food, making people very sick. Fortunately there haven't been any, I hope, really serious illnesses or deaths as a result of that. But it just reminds us how important it is that we have qualified public servants who have no other goals in mind than to do inspections and to make sure the public is kept safe.

One of the issues we have to think about when we're discussing this bill is that we're concerned that it's going to mean quicker approvals, but which come at the expense of public safety. When we go back to Walkerton—I attended a good deal of Judge O'Connor's hearings and read the reports and his recommendations, both part one and part two. We all know that several things happened that contributed to the tragedy in Walkerton, but one of the pieces, and a key piece, was the privatization of the water testing labs. In a very short period of time—I think municipalities had eight weeks to find a lab to test their water, when previously they had relied on the government to do that. They knew, when they sent the water to a government lab, that there was a protocol in place, and the public servants who worked there knew whom to report to and everything was working the way it should have. Then the privatization happened too quickly for municipalities to be prepared. There were no rules about the labs being accredited. A lot of those small municipalities didn't even have access, and still don't, to accredited labs. Then we had the tragedy, and this was a piece of it that contributed to that.

We should be learning lessons from that. Shortly after Walkerton, we found out through I believe it was the auditor, that we had a serious problem with the letting go of a lot of our food inspectors. Remember that? We asked a lot of questions about that in the House. Again, consumers have to know, citizens have to know, when they go and buy food in a grocery store or drink a glass of water from the tap, that they're safe.

It's the same with the buildings that we live in, that we spend our time in. We take it for granted that the buildings we inhabit every day are safe.

I could be at home tonight in a pretty new house I bought recently, but I'm usually here so I'm still living in

a lot of boxes. The house is on Brooklyn Avenue in my riding, near Queen and Pape. It's a beautiful little house. It's an old house.

Hon Mr Stockwell: What happened to the co-op?

Ms Churley: I've been long gone from there. This is the third house, I believe, since the co-op.

I really like this little house, but one of the considerations when we buy, not just an old house but a new house, is that the house has been thoroughly inspected and we know that it was built according to a building code. If it wasn't, then we do the work to upgrade the electricity system. We look for the flaws because we don't want to end up having a fire due to faulty electrical wiring, and all kinds of other problems that can exist if a strict building code isn't adhered to.

Mr Marchese: And the city would be liable.

Ms Churley: That's right, the city would be liable. But this bill is taking that liability away. It's critical that the government members understand that this bill before us tonight is primarily a safety bill and some of the aspects of the bill are leaving the safety that we all rely on—we depend on these dedicated public servants who really know their stuff.

I was a city councillor for a very short time and I can't tell you how impressed I was by the bureaucrats and the civil servants who worked as building inspectors. They were incredible. As the member for Beaches-East York, our municipal affairs critic, said on Monday night when he was speaking to this bill, if you look at the building inspectors from any municipality across Ontario, you will see the same thing. They have no axe to grind. They're paid a salary. They work as efficiently as they can within the law, but they also make sure that when they examine a building code, when they go out to examine a house or any kind of structure that's been built or renovated, they do their job thoroughly because their primary goal is safety.

We know, and I mentioned this earlier, that there are spikes. Mr Prue talked about that as well. I remember when I was on Toronto city council that there would be problems at times in the summer months, when most of the people are doing their renovations and their building, when there would be a flood of applications. They would get behind and they'd do their catch-up during the winter months. We all agree that can be a problem. One of the things the member for Beaches-East York, when he was the mayor of the then East York, which of course this government destroyed and folded into the city of Toronto—although I must say, on behalf of the citizens of East York, they are making sure their community continues to stand. They are now fighting to keep their civic building in public hands for community use. But Mr Prue, when he was the mayor of East York, started to tackle this problem internally. He talked about it the other night. He didn't come to the government and say, "Let's have a new bill and let's privatize these vital services," but, "Let's all work together internally and try to sort out this problem." And they did. They were able to deal internally with the spike and the flood of appli-

cations and the long delays. They dealt with it. Even during the recession in the early 1990s, they had a boom. There was a lot of construction going on in East York. So there are things that the municipalities can do to deal with this problem.

What this bill is doing is moving simultaneously to limit building permit fees and allowing municipalities to contract out plan review and construction inspection. This, along with the downloading that has been relentless—the downloading from the federal government to the provincial government and the provincial government's massive amount of downloading to the municipalities without the resources to fulfill the requirements of the new workload that was handed down to them—could put municipalities in a straightjacket—and the government knows this—where they are forced to privatize for financial reasons. This could very well put public safety at risk. Despite some of the safeguards the government has tried to build in, it's not good enough.

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The government as well has introduced an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, but they're refusing to allow this to override the building code, and this could leave people with disabilities out in the cold.

Another important aspect to this bill, another key component which is missing entirely—and it's something most people would not have noticed, but it's something I've been working on for years. Before I came to this place, before I went to city hall, where I started the energy efficiency office—remember that?—which led to the now very famous Toronto atmospheric fund—energy efficiency and conservation have for a very long time been of interest and concern to me and something that would go a long way in dealing with our environmental problems and global warming. Indeed there is nothing in this bill about energy efficiency, and here was the perfect opportunity for the government, while addressing and changing the building code law, to build in some key components for building efficiency and conservation.

What I want to point out to the members is that even more importantly—I believe it was just yesterday that the select committee on alternative fuel sources, of which I was a member, presented its report to the House. I want to tell you, when the committee first started—and I was on it from day one, and like all the members of that committee worked extremely hard. The committee worked well together and overall I'm very proud of this report. It's an unusual document in that generally there was a consensus reached. There were some things that it was agreed would be taken out because I couldn't support them, and there was hard bargaining and arguing about some of it, except for the energy from waste component in here, which I argued ferociously shouldn't even be in a document that talks about alternative green fuel sources and green industry. But that's the only piece, I think. There might be a few small things that I don't agree with in this report.

One of the things that was missing from the terms of reference of this committee when it was first started was

energy efficiency and conservation. After several discussions and arguments and presentations from some key environmental groups from the community, the committee agreed with me and said, "Yes, energy conservation and efficiency should be a key component and part of our recommendations in this report." I'm happy to say that in this select committee on alternative fuel sources document, on page 21, section A.9 is on energy conservation and efficiency measures. There is a commentary, and I want to read this to you, because you will understand when I read this to you why it would have been in the government's interest and in all of our interest to have the building code law amended to include energy efficiency and conservation. It says this:

"The committee has concluded that conservation and efficiency measures can contribute to meeting Ontario's fuel and energy requirements and is of the view that the reduction of energy demand is more important than new supply. Such measures can serve to reduce, or partly eliminate, the need for additional fuel consumption and/or power generation capacity. Energy efficiency and conservation leading to reduced fuel use serves to lessen air emissions. Conservation measures and related technologies can also positively impact upon employment, technology and manufacturing capacity in Ontario. The systems benefit charge as proposed earlier can also support conservation measures."

I'm not going to read all of the recommendations. I'm sure you'd love to hear them all, but I won't have time. You can read them yourselves later. But I'm going to read you one in particular. It's recommendation 47, and this is the one that's pertinent to the bill before us. It reads:

"The Ontario government shall commence a review of the Ontario Building Code to incorporate the most advanced science with respect to energy generation and conservation, mandate the use of co-generation units, and establish an objective for energy self-sufficiency in all residential and commercial construction. Technologies such as solar wall cladding heating applications, or equivalent, for commercial and multi-residential buildings will be mandatory, whenever feasible. Renewable energy audits using the Natural Resources Canada RETScreen ... or similar software, where feasible, will also be mandatory."

This report just came out, but the government knew there was a committee working on these issues. The issue of energy conservation vis-à-vis the building code has been raised by me in this House before. Here we have before us a bill that's dealing with amendments to the building code and there's not a word in it about energy efficiency and conservation at a time when the Legislature is coming out with a report that recommends that the building code be reviewed to make sure there is energy efficiency and conservation within this bill. If this bill passes as is, when is it going to be opened up again to deal with energy conservation and efficiency? It should be done now. This is an opportunity for the government to send the bill out to committee and immediately adopt

some of the recommendations within this report that came before the House yesterday. I think everybody will agree that it's a very good report. The recommendations, if followed through with, will put Ontario in the lead, at the forefront of alternative fuel sources and green energy. That's a long shot with this government, I know, but you should read the report. It's excellent.

If this isn't done now, while we have the opportunity with the bill before us, it's not going to happen for a long time. The NDP brought in all kinds of green energy programs and green communities—remember that?—conservation and efficiency programs. One of the first things this government did was cancel all these programs. So there aren't any of these programs any more. Fortunately some people continued their programs and are continuing to work on efficiency and conservation measures. But we need the building code amended to include those recommendations from the alternative fuel sources document. I hope the government will listen to that and pay attention. I do hope the government will allow public hearings on this so that AMO and others will have an opportunity to speak to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Comments and questions? The member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Speaker. Welcome to the chair. I want to comment on some of the statements made by my friend the member for Toronto-Danforth. I've got to say that it's not as exciting when the Conservative Party members don't speak. It's dull in this place without you. You sit there and are silent in your support of this bill. But it's terrible for me, because I enjoy listening to you. I've got to tell you, if I enjoy it, so does the public. Without you speaking, it's just not the same. So, please, take your two minutes, take your 20 minutes and engage us, engage the public and tell the public why you love this bill so much. I think it would be helpful.

The member raises the point about the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. There are 35 recommendations—

Mr Caplan: There are 33.

Mr Marchese: Thirty-three? More or less, give or take a couple of recommendations. There are 33 recommendations. That's a lot. My assumption—and I'm not an expert in this, and I haven't had an opportunity to read them. Our critic, who will do the leadoff, will get into some of those, obviously. But presumably in those recommendations there are many that the government might be interested in. I'm assuming they haven't had an opportunity to review them, but when they do, in committee hearings they will be able to absorb, internalize them and make this bill, hopefully, better, because presumably they have the public interest at heart. They would be concerned about public safety; they would be concerned about building to code, as it should be, by law, and that the commercial buildings that we build, industrial buildings, multi-residential buildings and homes are built according to code and are made accountable in a way that we would have nothing to fear and in a way that we would know people are incorruptible. That's the point of having the current civil service do it.

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The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Thank you for the pleasure, Mr Speaker. I want to comment on the wide-ranging presentation from the member for Toronto-Danforth.

What she's saying is for this government to be very cautious before they proceed, because you're going to affect a lot of people's lifetime investment, and that is their home. That is something that you can't take too lightly, and that's why it's surprising the government is not seeing it important enough even to speak to or discuss. That's what's very surprising.

I guess the question is, if they're proposing this bill, why won't they speak to it? I don't know why they've been gagged. I know Guy Giorno isn't around any more. I don't know who's doing the gagging now. It must be another whiz kid.

One of the things that's very interesting is that in the last 12 months we've built more homes in Toronto than any other city in North America—more than Chicago, New York, LA. So Toronto is a real hotbed of construction activity, no thanks to the provincial government, which basically downloads on Toronto and doesn't give it any help whatsoever. Therefore, the citizens of Toronto and their council deserve some praise because they've been able to make the city prosper despite the downloading of this reckless government, which has done nothing but take away subsidies for the TTC, download housing—public housing is now downloaded on to property taxes. This is a shameful group that basically says they've cut taxes yet they've downloaded on to the property taxpayers—

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr Dunlop: It is a pleasure to rise and make a few comments on some of the comments of the member from Toronto-Danforth. If you listen to the opposition, it's the Chicken Little syndrome: the sky is falling on everything; everything is wrong.

Does anybody remember where we were in 1992-93? Ladies and gentlemen and the people at home, there was nobody working. There was no boom in the number of houses being built in the city of Toronto. There were no skyscrapers being built. There were no cranes on the roofs of buildings. No one was working.

We've turned to the private sector. We've cut taxes to make the people of Ontario feel like there's a place and a province to invest in. We've allowed a lot of entrepreneurs to advance, creating jobs. I think right now the job creation is around 850,000 since Mike Harris formed the government.

I know that you people on that side of the House opposed all the tax cuts we made, but we believe that those dollars—

Interjections.

Mr Dunlop: And of course everybody is heckling now because—they're worried about our speaking or not. But the fact of the matter is that people are spending

money, the economy is still strong in this province and there are still a lot of jobs being created.

We talk about the number of portables that are being removed from schools. I think over 1,000 portables have been taken away in Ontario. Over \$1 billion has been spent on our universities. Those are all construction jobs. Of course, more homes are being built in Ontario today than at any time in this province's history.

I've enjoyed the comments, but we've already spent quite a bit of time in debate on this bill. I look forward to listening to your comments as the time goes on this evening.

Mr Caplan: I want to congratulate the member from Toronto-Danforth on her comments. They were very wide-ranging. She didn't touch on a couple of points, and I wanted to bring them out, and maybe she'll comment on them now. The Ontario Building Officials Association says that section 4.2 of this bill will potentially compromise fire safety in Ontario. That's very serious, and this is not a joking matter. Members of the government should look very seriously at the implications of this. These are the professional building inspectors of the province of Ontario. They're not partisan in any way. They have no axe to grind. That was also covered by AMO, by the way, which the member did talk about—AMO and the 33 recommendations that they've made.

There was one other point I found really, really fascinating. A couple of months ago we passed a new Municipal Act here in this House. The new Municipal Act had a memorandum of understanding. The memorandum of understanding says that each party will respect each party's area of jurisdiction. So, for example, the province has areas of jurisdiction, municipalities have areas of jurisdiction and each one will respect the other. Bill 124 is pretty prescriptive about some of the municipal areas of jurisdiction, so it's a real contradiction. I know my colleague from Toronto-Danforth is a former Toronto councillor. I know she has two minutes to respond. But this whole notion that somehow in a memorandum of understanding we're going to respect each area of jurisdiction, yet we're confronted with a bill like Bill 124, which of course micromanages an area of municipal jurisdiction—perhaps the member from Toronto-Danforth will want to talk about the contradiction of this government's actions and of their words.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Toronto-Danforth has two minutes to respond.

Ms Churley: And I sure do want to sum up here. I was very pleased to see the member for Simcoe North from the Tory benches get up and speak for two minutes. Where's the whip? You're going to be in trouble because I think—

Mr Dunlop: I'm the whip.

Ms Churley: You're the whip? Oh, you allowed yourself to speak tonight.

I just want to say to all of the members, thank you for your comments, but I particularly want to say to the member for Simcoe North, your tax cuts led to the tragedy in Walkerton. Your tax cuts led to thousands of

people being homeless, including families and children. Your tax cuts led to seniors lining up at food banks. Your tax cuts, your downloading, your de-rent-control have led to people being this close to being homeless. Your tax cuts have led to a growing gap between the rich and the poor. Your tax cuts, as demonstrated in a report recently put out by the United Way, have led to, in the city of Toronto in economic good times, the gap between the rich and the poor actually widening.

So you can get up and brag about jobs that you've created during very good economic times, you can get up and talk about that, but you can also continue to stick your heads in the sand and ignore the plight of thousands and thousands of your residents, your citizens across this province. Finally, I will say that there are real safety concerns in this bill. We're talking about the building code and the implications to people and their safety if the inspections are not done properly.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It's a pleasure to join this debate, one-sided as it is, but one-sided as it must be, because there can't be authorship taken on the other side of the House for a bill like this. The government had in fact addressed a somewhat reasonable question for the public interest: how do we reconcile the public interest with a more effective means of government to work? That's what they took on, but that's not what we have in front of us today.

Instead, we have a government that has taken a route every one on both sides of this House recognizes. It has the same ingredients each time. What is it? It's ideological. Again, rather than look for a made-in-Ontario solution, they are still getting stuff out of the discount bin of the Republicans down south. Let the private sector do it. It's ideological. It just doesn't have its own intrinsic response to the needs of the people of Ontario.

It's about mismanagement. It sets up again a lack of oversight, a lack of actual direction for what was supposed to be at hand here, which was how to make building inspections happen in a way that would improve safety and effectiveness and so on—all the misnomers that are in the name of this bill.

Further, it's lazy. Just as we have the members sitting on their hindquarters tonight, we have a bill in front of us that shows the effects of a government not prepared to roll up its sleeves, not prepared to address inadequacies, let alone listen to them or debate them in the Legislature where they're supposed to.

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We had here an interesting challenge, one which some other jurisdictions have grappled with. As I mentioned, down in the south they've had trouble with exactly these kinds of initiatives. They have in other jurisdictions like New Zealand and Australia as well. But here in this province of Ontario, we have a government not really willing to learn, not really willing to do the job they've been hired to do, and that's a very tricky area to enter into. The government is like people who don't know how to canoe; they just crash into each wave over and over again, rather

than find a way to actually get at it, or how to find if there is a way.

This is the problem. This is where ideology and, I suppose to some extent, laziness creeps into the government's perspective. They don't really try to find out where the trade-off is between the public interest and the profit motive. The result is they have set up some impossible contradictions in the bill in front of us today. We expect businesses to make money; that's what we want them to do, and that profit motive is what drives them. But when it comes to the public interest, public safety and, indeed, most of the business of this House—there are some lords of the manor on the opposite side who might delude themselves that somehow they have some impact on the economy and so forth, but our job is another sector. It's public safety. It's to make sure the economy can operate while there are other things that happen, and quite frankly, the economy wouldn't operate if we didn't do our job well. We're being asked, then, to look at this government on its track record in terms of privatization, it's track record in terms of protection for people, particularly in the area of housing. On neither of those, on the face of it, could we accept authority for this bill.

I want to iterate and give the people watching at home some expectation in advance of the more erudite coverage that's going to come from the member for Don Valley East about and concerning the details of section 4.2, which is the area that was not in the advanced committee report. The government did put together, under one of its committees, a group of people around the province to try to look at and do what this government finds hardest to do because it's tough to do. It takes work, it takes energy, it takes perspicacity—none of them qualities of this government—to actually find a solution that finds a trade-off, in this case again between the public and private interests. Instead, suddenly we see section 4.2 in this bill, which talks to developers appointing their own inspectors. As baldly as that: they get to pick the people who get to inspect them. All we have is a very, very weak clause that says you shouldn't be involved in a conflict of interest. While they may not be able to fire those people while they're on the job, they sure as heck don't have to hire them the next time. It will be very, very clear to this class of people, these registered code agencies the government wants to put in charge of the safety of the structures over our heads and housing our families and businesses, that they will not be able to effect that job.

This is ground we've been on before. This is the selfsame government that, back in 1996 and 1997, brought forward a bill on self-regulation and has given, very arguably unsuccessfully, jurisdiction to the industry, in terms of amusement devices and elevating devices, for example. Certainly in the area of amusement devices, we've had accidents in places like Ottawa that have brought that into question. We have a lot of muttering going on within that industry about whether the technical authority that's been set up is really up to that job.

We look at some of those other initiatives. In fact, one of the things I think the people in this House, even on the other side, choose not to remember is that when they set up those authorities, when they privatized them and said, "We're going to let the profit motive run health and safety and well-being," in fact they lost this province \$7 million. That's what the government did from the get-go. So there wasn't any effectiveness and, in fact, the government gave away \$7 million. That on a day when we are considering the hydro bill we have in front of us, legislation that has been arrived at out of conversations in the Albany Club. It's not done out here in the public interest. That's why there aren't members standing up from the opposite side. They don't really address this bill. It's not really their bill in that way. They've been told what to allow and what to permit.

For the \$7 million we lost in some of those self-regulating agencies, we don't have the same level of protection we used to have before. We're going to find, just like they did in California, that when you self-regulate in areas like real estate, the travel industry and so on, you eventually take them back. The process happens over a number of years, but it only needs to be that the industry finds itself in a compromise, maybe in a downturn, maybe in a time when increases in fees are required, and suddenly there's a conflict, suddenly there's a restriction on its ability to act. We don't need to go to California to find where that can work its way out. While it may pain some of the members opposite to think about it, it should not. Everybody in this House, I suppose, bears some responsibility for the existence of Walkerton, but none of us bear more responsibility than another to make sure it doesn't happen again in any area.

You'll hear again from my colleague about the fire risk and the risk to health and safety. In fact, that's exactly how the Association of Municipalities of Ontario terms it. They talk about a risk to health and safety; an erosion of public health and safety that will happen if section 4.2 is allowed to go ahead, if we actually take government out of the equation, if we take the disinterested party out of it.

That is where ideology comes in as well. The people opposite, many of whom are afraid to speak tonight, don't want to expose that clear bias on their part. They're unable to act in impartial judgment because they believe inherently that if the government is involved it can't be made to work, and that's where the laziness comes in. Rather than do the real work, rather than do the job of how to make sure a government agency could deliver on what it's supposed to do—to take it apart and find the way that direction could happen from the provincial government, that co-operation and collaboration could happen with the municipalities to actually solve this problem—they sit back in their easy chair. They sit back in the La-Z-Boy and say, "No, we don't need to understand this problem. Instead, all we've got to do is hand it off to the private sector, and our other favourite trick"—pull it out of the bag—"which is bash on somebody else."

The government has no idea how to get something done in terms of actually getting the results they want,

and in this case they want to push municipalities. So they will force things on municipalities, force costs on municipalities, force new regimes on municipalities without so much as sitting down with them and working out how this could be made to work. It's because somehow, some way, the Conservative Party of Ontario, the governing party today, the Harris-Eves government, comes from this funny place: a corporatist government. It believes in big things. It believes in its own power, its own ability to sit in those Lay-Z-Boys in Queen's Park, push buttons and make things happen in our communities and yet not take any responsibility.

The issue of liability was raised earlier tonight and it's startling that the government would set all the rules, as it does in a number of other things in the province, and then excuses itself: the dine-and-dash government of the age. They keep passing the rules and not wanting to stick around for the consequences. That is not just reprehensible from a standpoint of responsibility taking, but from the standpoint of the standard of behaviour of any self-respecting level of government, it is dangerous. It is dangerous to have a level of government pass laws for which it will not make itself accountable in the future and that's what we have here today.

We have to ask ourselves, under the various objectives this government might legitimately have had, we see within this bill—somewhere back then when this was being formulated—there probably was a legitimate objective but it's fallen off. Sometime—

Mr Marchese: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Could you check for quorum, please?

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: Quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Parkdale-High Park.

Mr Kennedy: I'll give the veritable flood of government members who have shown up the chance to settle. I'm sure they'd like a summary of where we were, but in essence, I'm talking about their inability to grab hold of the task that was at hand. It is indeed startling that rather than work this through, rather than try and find a way to make it work, they have reached into this grab bag of lazy ideological tricks, pushed the lower level of government and handed it off to the private sector without adequate protection. It wasn't in the proposal that was a prelude to this bill that was developed by one of their own members. It didn't say, "Let the developers choose their own inspectors," but suddenly it's there. When did that happen? Sometime between the dessert tray and the cigars at the Albany Club. It's fairly obvious that's when this got done. That's when a lot of this stuff gets done and that's why everybody here tonight has stuffed a sock in it. That's why they're being quiet about it, because it's self-dealing, just like the Hydro bill this afternoon. It benefits somebody at somebody's expense. How does that make any sense? You take something through a process and it makes a mockery of it, just like they make a mockery of debate tonight by not participating in it.

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Instead, they could have tackled this, because there are important issues at work here. Building inspections matter. They matter to people in new buildings; they matter to people in places like rental accommodation, where the only thing they have to depend on is the efficacy of those city inspectors. I can tell you not all is well with the state of inspection even as it exists today. Some of these members opposite—one of them in particular I remember was here when I brought down a woman who lives in my riding who now drinks Kool-Aid about 15 days of the month because she can't afford anything else to drink. Why? It's because these members opposite in some other part of their housing policy allowed maximum rent policy to come into play. Maximum rent policy was their version of letting somebody benefit. It said that you could make all the rent increases you couldn't do under the old system all at once on the basis of one successful building inspection.

I can tell you, some very suspicious building inspections happen from time to time for some of these building and have found people like Sookranie Lucknauth holding the bag for 50% increases in rent. There was one member opposite who had the audacity to even challenge whether that was true, and to her credit, she immediately sent down a copy of her rent stub which she had with her to show that in fact this government had caused her to pay a 50% increase.

I tried for a number of weeks in my riding to get building inspections done for people who live in these decrepit buildings, these terrible places, where they have a choice of hazards, where the wind comes whistling through in the wintertime, where there are pests, where there is crumbling plaster, where there are elevators that don't work, and where the government of the day, in this other realm in which they want us to trust today in their stewardship over housing, has allowed rent increases of 35%, 36%, 38% and 50%. Those increases stand to this day. Do you know what they did in the city of Toronto? Building inspections had a habit, because of their lack of manpower, where they actually called the people who were supposed to be inspected and said, "You've got a complaint."

I can tell you, in some parts of my riding there are new Canadians who want to know there's somebody who's supposed to stand up for them and instead find out that they call the landlord and the landlord comes to them, not the building inspectors. We've worked hard with the city of Toronto to try and get around that problem, but I can't imagine what it would be like if those were private-sector people. This is their life for people for whom 65% to 85% of their income is paid out in rent. They depend on these inspectors to get the rudiments of the quality of life that most members of this House can bloody well take for granted on their own, and we're saying in this bill we don't care. There are insufficient safeguards and protections here. For most of us it isn't going to make a heck of a lot of difference in our quality of life. I suppose that's the other reason why a lot of people here on the

government side say they don't need to speak to the bill. They don't see the interest at home, but we have a responsibility to serve the broad interest. It will only take one bad set of inspections or one bad registered code agency to cause a terrific amount of problems.

We know in other provinces there have been failures of building inspections. We hear about the condominiums in British Columbia that have caused billions of dollars worth of liability for others to happen. It happened under a certain kind of regime, but the point is there are no guarantees to improve the inspection process really in this bill. There's talk about a code of conduct: how will the government see that enforced, for example? If we wish to do this job, let's do it. Let's find a means of making it happen, but let's not pretend the bill we have in front of us addresses that. We say specifically around section 4.2, the business of self-appointment really does expose the government as having taken something worthwhile, something I don't think any party in this House would say they wouldn't, and probably haven't, at some point, attempted to address: the idea of streamlining regulation or finding a way to have the proper trade-off between the ability of a company to make money, to do the things that keep it profitable, and actually protect the public interest.

I think the industry, which may be pushing this, may want to rethink this. If they look back and see the number of times the government of the day has bumbled its efforts at privatization, they may not wish to be a part of this. They may not wish to be part of something that is going to come back and cost them in the future as well—that's the upshot. This is not about the ideological clarity or purity that some of the people opposite want to have; it's not just about "the private sector is always better." At some point, someone's going to pay for the quality of the decisions we make in this House and, more to the point, the quality of the decisions inspectors are going to make. It doesn't make sense to me that the government of the day would not be prepared to deal with some of this and deal with some fairly substantive needs being put forward by the municipalities themselves.

I would like to echo what the member for Don Valley East has already mentioned. There was a commitment by this government, with a fair amount of trumpets and banners and so forth, that they would respect municipalities. Instead, in this bill—something I know the member for Eglinton-Lawrence would find of particular interest, given his Bill 61—they're giving more powers to the Ontario Municipal Board, so that this unaccountable, unelected authority is going to have a say over site plans and whether or not they apply. Rather than respecting municipalities, rather than being like—

Ms Churley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum.

The Acting Speaker: Would you check if there's a quorum present, please?

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Parkdale-High Park.

Mr Kennedy: For the people of Ontario joining us tonight, they may be aware that not a single member of the government party has spoken to this bill in the time of debate. We had one member get up and speak for two minutes. Two minutes is what the government could afford. At that time, as an elected representative in the province of Ontario, he talked about a Chicken Little kind of attitude. I say this with the utmost seriousness, in the sense of not wishing to do anything but take our part of the responsibility for what follows: in a province that has had Walkerton, we in this House don't have the luxury of that kind of outlook, of saying we don't require due probity when it comes to a building. A building could fall down, people could be in trouble, there could be inspections that won't take place, there could be all kinds of people who do not get what they require in terms of this service. We're not going to overstate this in the sense of its immediate impact on health and safety, but it is real, and this disdain or disrespect for that doesn't add to the debate.

So I, like other speakers who have been up tonight, enjoin the government to at least make itself heard in the debate, and we hope it will be informed by that kind of attitude. There are deficiencies in this bill. They should be defended and debated and, in fact, identified by the members opposite.

This is about something that shouldn't be loaded with ideology. It can only be ideology, though, that would see it go whizzing through uncommented on by the people opposite. Because there is nothing any objective authority has said about it yet that says it deserves that kind of approbation, unless it's in the negative, unless this is really something the members opposite want to disown. They won't take personal responsibility, but they're prepared, as they have been so many times before, to hand this—

The Acting Speaker: Order. I just want to point out to the speaker that the observations may be accurate, but I want you to be careful that you don't impugn motive.

Mr Kennedy: Mr Speaker, I would appreciate any specific point when I get near that, because it is certainly not my intent.

I would say further that far from impugning motive, we're saying that somebody needs to explain what's in front of us. Why do we have section 4.2? Why don't we have instead something that is more reasonable and more balanced? Why do developers get to appoint their own inspectors? Surely every person in this House who isn't clouded by some wilful thinking is going to agree that you're putting the profit motive and the public interest too close together. We should never force somebody to have to choose between their self-interest and the public interest, and that's what this does. That creates not only individual circumstances for that but a system that could be built on that. That's what the municipalities have been

telling us. These organizations won't even respond to them.

Further, as I'm sure the member for Don Valley East is going to tell us, and it looks like he will probably be the next speaker because we don't have members opposite, this is a problem for fire safety—
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The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Mr Marchese: I want to praise the comments made by the member for Parkdale-High Park, because it was a good social democratic speech. His views and mine are sometimes in line with each other.

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): That's true. He should be with you.

Mr Marchese: David, I did praise him for his social democratic speech.

He speaks of the role of the civil service, the role of protecting the public interest, the role of governments, the role of having laws that are protected by governments and enacted by governments. In this case, protecting the public interest should be in the hands of municipalities and the inspectors whose work and job are designed to protect me—the public interest—which is what it's all about. He argued quite correctly that if there are some deficiencies, identify them and make them better. But you don't do it by privatizing the service, which is what this bill is all about. It's just not the way you do it.

We understand why you're doing it. First of all, you're downloading a whole lot to the cities by way of costs for housing. You downloaded transportation and, yes, you realized that was a heavy load for municipalities so you're taking some of that back. They still have child care and welfare on the backs of the property taxpayer. You've downloaded so much on them that you're trying to give them a hand now. By this bill what you're saying is, "You can privatize to save money." At what cost? That is the argument that the member for Parkdale-High Park is getting at. There is a potential social cost connected to privatizing a service that ought to remain in the public domain. That's the way it should be. That's the appeal he makes that we make to you, the public watching this debate.

Ms Churley: I rise for the fourth or fifth time here tonight. Again, the Tories have an opportunity to at least rise for two minutes.

Mr Marchese: They're silent. Provoke them, Marilyn.

Ms Churley: I've already provoked them. I might be able to do it again. They could rise and talk about why they support bill. They've listened to many speeches from both the Liberals and the New Democratic Party tonight. We've pointed out our concerns time and time again and we haven't heard back from the government.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): We're listening.

Ms Churley: If you're listening, why don't you get up and tell us what you think? For instance, what has been

said over and over again tonight is that we're concerned about safety, and we made several suggestions as to what needs to be changed to deal with this.

One of the things we're very concerned about is that under this bill, the province and municipalities are exempt from any legal liability over anything done by an RCA. An RCA, in case you haven't figured this out by now, is a registered code agency, and that's code for privatization. That's what this bill is all about.

Of course, there has been so much downloading to the municipalities that they are strapped for cash. They're having to raise taxes time and time again.

Mr Marchese: Here's another tool. We'll give you a tool.

Ms Churley: The tool they've given to the municipalities in this bill is that if they don't have enough money internally to fix the problem, they might find contracting out helpful to deal with the ups and downs of the construction business cycle. So we're concerned about allowing applicants to hire their own RCAs. This could be a problem. They're not accountable. While this kind of thing is commonly used in auditing, this is not a good direction to go when it comes to the safety of our buildings.

Mr Wetlaufer: I'm really having trouble listening to all the rhetoric tonight. For the past seven years the opposition and the third party have criticized our government for not listening, even when we listened. So tonight we're sitting here, listening to everything they have to say, and now we're being criticized for not speaking. The Liberals and the NDP seem to want it both ways. I used to think the NDP were different, but tonight they're starting to sound like Liberals.

Mr Caplan: The member from Parkdale-High Park pointed out some very legitimate concerns about Bill 124, particularly in regard to section 4.2. Members of this House would do well to heed what he had to say. Interestingly enough—and I do have a copy from the Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group, led by Brian Coburn when we was parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

I should tell you that BRRAG had 90 recommendations. It was an industry-wide advisory group, comprising municipalities, home builders, construction companies, building inspection officials—a wide, wide group of people. Nowhere in these 90 recommendations they made would you find section 4.2 of this bill authorizing registered code agencies. I'm disappointed that we haven't had one member of the government stand up and talk about where this came from and why, if there was broad industry consensus and a comprehensive set of recommendations, these weren't implemented and something else has appeared in Bill 124. That's a very good question. Why did that happen? How did that happen? What are the implications for public safety?

We've had the member from Kitchener Centre get up and make some kinds of comments, nothing related to the bill, of course. We haven't heard from any members of the government. I wish they would speak to some of the

very legitimate concerns of the bill. I hope that when the bill goes to committee, if it goes to committee, there will be a chance to amend sections of this bill. To be fair, it could be a good piece of legislation. It could be strengthened. The member from Parkdale-High Park has pointed out on a number of occasions where this bill fails that test. You would do very well to heed his words, and I want to congratulate him for making some excellent comments tonight.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Parkdale-High Park for two minutes to respond.

Mr Kennedy: I want to send my thanks to the members who commented: the members for Don Valley East, Toronto-Danforth and Trinity-Spadina, and also the member for Kitchener Centre, although whatever concerns I have about this bill have been amplified because I've never seen the member from Kitchener Centre stand on his feet for such a short period of time when more time was available to him. So it leads at least to a concern.

It is I think a problem—when in my riding, for example, we have a private development, it hires its own environmental inspectors. That's what happens in this province. Let me tell you that you cannot get the government involved. Even if there is suspicion of a problem, they will not get involved with that private site; it is just privately hired people. They write an impressive set of reports, but they're engaged by the developer. So what did we find out last week? We found out that in Wendigo Creek there are rivulets of petroleum products pouring into that creek, likely coming from the suspect site which had been inspected by private sector environmental inspectors. In their report, carefully worded, it says, "We found no evidence to believe that there was external contamination." Well, it's pouring into that creek. I can tell you right now that I'll be back in this House looking to remedy that situation because we are not well protected when the Ministry of the Environment cannot act. We're still trying to get them to act in that case.

A similar situation exists here for fire safety and for building safety. We have set up, or this government would like us to agree to set up, a conflict between the public and the profit motive. It doesn't mean we can't have both of them get along, but they have derided the work of Mr Coburn and they have taken away from the work of the industry and in fact of the municipalities, and they've given us instead something we're used to, which is a mishmash. It simply doesn't work.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate?

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Mr Caplan: I am very pleased to speak to Bill 124. I have spoken with municipal officials, building officials and home builders, and I want to reflect on some of the comments and some of the concerns that they have made to me, in particular about Bill 124.

At the outset of my comments I do want to recognize the work, and I mentioned this earlier, of the Building

Regulatory Reform Advisory Group led by now-Minister Brian Coburn when he was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It was a broad-based and extensive consultation on which some very good work was done, and I do want to acknowledge that.

What the contributors to BRRAG are finding surprising when they read Bill 124 is that things that were recommended in the BRRAG report aren't in the bill, and there are things in the bill that were not recommended in BRRAG. I'm going to talk a little bit about that tonight. I would challenge now-Minister Coburn or any member of the government to explain some of these inconsistencies, why recommendations from a very broad and good consultative process are not found in this bill, and why others that were not recommended or rejected by that advisory group have found their way into Bill 124.

I'm going to raise some specific concerns about items that are in the bill and how they relate to the memorandum of understanding signed just a few months ago with municipalities under the very much ballyhooed new Municipal Act, its memorandum of understanding to respect the various powers and jurisdictions of both the province and municipalities. So those are going to be the focus of the remarks I'm going to be making here tonight. The focus is going to be certainly on the creation of registered code agencies.

Municipal stakeholders such as AMO don't entirely oppose the creation of these municipal agencies. Municipalities have used them in the past. In fact, some municipalities contract out their services to other municipalities. I know, for example, the town of Aurora acts as a code agency for Whitchurch-Stouffville and King City. Sometimes when they need coverage, one will cover for—and there's nothing wrong with that. What they do oppose, however, is section 4.2 of the bill. Section 4.2 of the bill allows builders to be able to select their own registered code agencies. There is something inherently dangerous about that.

The member for High Park earlier said, and he illustrated this very well, "I hire you to do the work. You do the work. You owe a duty to me, not necessarily to the public and to public safety issues. If you don't produce a report or act in a way that is going to be beneficial to me, I may not hire you again." There is considerable influence that can be brought to bear when I get to self-select my own agency, especially for a matter like this, so critically important to public safety, such as building inspection or fire safety.

The pressure on municipalities to permit this option is going to be overwhelming, I guarantee you, and it will remove local councils' ability to effectively manage registered code agencies, to effectively manage building that's taking place within their municipality.

There are major questions around conflict of interest that I've just highlighted. So where registered code agencies are employed directly, there will be a great deal of pressure placed upon them to approve the work being done by those who have hired them. Their ability to get

hired for future projects may depend on their speed and their flexibility on the approvals that they make.

The registered code agencies appointed under section 4.2 will not be accountable to municipal governments. That's clearly in the bill. To most people who were part of BRRAG, to most people who should be of good character and good sense in this Legislature, that should not be acceptable. So today I want to put the government formally on notice: I will be proposing amendments in this regard, and my hope is that government members are listening to these particular concerns and will support measures that will give municipalities effective tools to be able to manage registered code agencies.

The Ontario Building Officials Association—they were part of BRRAG as well—have raised some very good and very specific concerns about section 4.2. They have a real fear that the use of section 4.2 by registered code agencies will compromise fire safety.

I am going to quote directly from the letter they sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

"Under section 4.2 of Bill 124, equivalencies can be proposed through an RCA. The municipality does not review plans for permit issuance and therefore any equivalencies that may impact fire services will not be known to the fire services until the project is completed. This process could"—and in fact will—"impact fire suppression and life safety."

That is a very serious concern. I think it's really important that the government review section 4.2. I think it's important that the government be willing to accept and entertain amendment to section 4.2, if not completely reject it altogether.

There is consensus among municipal stakeholders that section 4.2 can only assist in meeting the goals of the legislation. I agree that ensuring a municipal decision-making role is the key and that any move away can only result in disaster, possibly a loss of life, and untold liability.

This is really important to remember. Who holds the liability? The municipality. They represent the citizens in their particular community. It is ultimately liability that's going to be held by the citizens of any community around Ontario.

Even a municipality that was separated from the decision-making process in section 4.2—it's important they hold that authority. The real concern lies in why the government in the first place proposed registered code agencies as they're described in section 4.2 of the legislation.

The BRRAG report did not suggest a need for the removal of the municipality and municipal direction from the process. That's quite correct. It's unclear why the government took the initiative in this regard; why, after quite a lengthy, broad and very good consultation with all of the industry, you moved in this direction.

I also have a real concern about the micromanagement approach that this bill takes to imposing fees. It's clear that the government wants to interfere with municipalities and their ability to set appropriate permit fees.

Despite new regulations for training, it is not clear that the bill will allow municipalities to recoup these costs through their fees.

The ministry's intention is to recertify every building inspection official across Ontario. As you can imagine, that's quite an expensive process, yet municipalities will not have the ability to recoup those fees in their permit fee structure.

As an example, the bill proposes that municipalities offer a reduced fee structure where a registered code agency has been appointed. What the bill does not acknowledge in setting the fees is that even if a registered code agency is involved, the municipality is still liable for certain issues if problems occur for a project provided for by section 4.2 of the bill.

For example, if a stop-work order is issued on a project, the burden of liability reverts back to the municipality, but the ability to recoup the costs through its permit fee structure does not. The municipalities are on the hook and they have to do all the work again. They also have to incur liability, thus carry insurance to be able to do it. They can't recoup it in the permit fee structure that they're able to set.

The key, and what should happen, is to provide flexibility to the municipalities. Both the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers agree, and they've pointed this out in communication with the minister and with the ministry.

I will be suggesting and bringing forward amendments to the bill in this regard. I hope the government members are going to be listening. I hope the government members are going to respect the wishes of municipalities. They certainly made that claim when they introduced the new Municipal Act, which was going to respect the various jurisdictions, both provincial and municipal.

Members of this House would be aware of that Municipal Act. They provided a structure for charging of fees such as permits and other kinds of charges. It's unclear to me why the government felt compelled to set out a similar yet more inflexible scheme than that found in the new Municipal Act. Officials have been trained in the new scheme and now you are proposing that they learn an entirely new set of restrictions and financial tools which could easily be addressed in existing legislation, in the new Municipal Act that you passed. That doesn't really seem to make too much sense to me. Why have two different and conflicting sets of rules and regulations? It sounds like a bunch of red tape. In fact, I even wonder whether the much-ballyhooed Red Tape Commission even looked at this bill and the implications of doing things in this way. It doesn't make a lot of sense when you consider the terms, as I've said, of the memorandum of understanding signed, supposedly in good faith, by the minister and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario only a few months ago.

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Bill 124 also talks about a code of conduct. Here's another part of the bill that was not part of BRRAG.

BRRAG doesn't talk about a code of conduct at all. In fact, aside from just being insulting, most municipalities already have codes of conduct. To me, it's just another example of the government trying to micromanage the affairs of municipal government. I know many of the members opposite and on this side have extensive experience in municipal government. I think some of my colleagues could speak very well about their frustration at provincial governments' imposing on and trying to micromanage their affairs.

On a fundamentally internal issue like human resources, why is the province doing this? I think that's a good question to ask. Perhaps members of the government will give us an answer. It's not in the spirit of the memorandum of understanding, which speaks directly to this. I'm going to quote the memorandum of understanding that you signed. In section 1.1 of the memo, it says, "to respect each party's area of jurisdiction." If the human resources of municipal officials is not an area of their own jurisdiction, I don't know what is.

Let me talk about parts of BRRAG that were omitted. There are over 90 recommendations in here, many of which did not make it into Bill 124. I heard some of the government members talk with pride on Monday about the extension of liability to all players in the building process to seven years, in line with the Ontario New Home Warranty Program. I want to read to you what the Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group had to say about this. It said, "The chair and vice-chairs recommend that the province mandate that designers, builder/general contractors/renovators and private inspection agencies carry insurance (or other equivalent coverage, including a warranty-type product) for a 10-year period following construction of a building." Let me say that again: "For a 10-year period following construction of a building." They went on to say that the government should "extend warranty-type coverage for new homes for major structural defects from the current seven years to 10 years." Why? Because major structural defects often show up in periods of time of about 10 years. So while having seven years of coverage is very good, it's almost worthless because the defect doesn't show up till much later.

I just referenced recommendation C.2.i of the July 2000 report to the minister. To hear the minister and government members say, "We've extended it to seven years," you'd think that they'd done something groundbreaking. In fact it's what already exists and it's contrary to the recommendations you were given by your own expert panel. I wonder why, of all the recommendations, they decided to shortchange that one.

The bill also stays away from the very critical issue of joint liability. Neither your Bill 10, the Limitations Act, which still languishes on the order paper after I think two years now, nor Bill 124 address the issue of joint liability between a code agency and a municipality or between any two parties to an agreement. What you're saying to municipalities is that they may still be forced to pay for large settlements, even though they may have been only

minimally involved in a project. All stakeholders must therefore have insurance that covers their share of any future damages that arise. That's only fair.

I want to pick up some of the recommendations from the association of municipalities. They speak of the need to ensure that the building code is accessible to the whole province. You know, there seems to be a conceit in here that it is only going to be in large municipalities, and suburban municipalities and many northern rural municipalities aren't going to have access to the provisions of the building code and of this act.

There is also a concern, especially with this move to the recertification of all the municipal officials out there, about the kind of costs that is going to incur, on smaller municipalities especially. So recommendation number 8 from AMO is that communities in rural and northern areas will need provincial financial assistance to implement the changes that you've placed in Bill 124, specifically around the training.

It's very interesting and I was shocked when I learned from the building officials the need to have an entire recertification. It would be much more effective but it also would be much more of a streamlined effect if you didn't do this. Imagine what's going to happen right now: all of your building officials are not going to be able to approve projects. You're going to bottleneck it because everyone's going to be going off for recertification. There are a lot of building officials out there. You're not going to be able to do this in any short period of time. What effect is that going to have on permit issuance, on building inspections, on getting things done efficiently? You're going to slow it down. In fact, this recommendation, as it stands now, as it plans to be implemented by the government, by the ministry, will have the opposite effect of what you say the goals are for this legislation. Be very careful, I say to members of the government, what you're doing here.

I've highlighted where this bill falls apart. I've highlighted as well that there are many laudable areas of the bill. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party support the goals of higher public safety standards. We support the goals of streamlining the process and having greater efficiency. We have several detailed proposals, simple amendments to this bill, which will accomplish and accommodate all of those objectives. I say to government members that with some very simple modifications, with some very good amendments, this is a bill that all members of this House could readily pass.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): That's not what they said.

Mr Caplan: I can't speak for the third party, my friend. I can't speak for them.

Mr Hardeman: You're all members of the House.

Mr Caplan: Any reasonable member of this House could pass this bill if it had some strengthening, if it had just a few amendments to it.

In conclusion, I think it's fair to say that there is some good work in the bill. There was a good consultation process; it was a very wide-ranging and a very thoughtful

one. Much more needs to be done, and I would argue that the proposed amendments will do just that. The government needs to have some public hearings, not very many, not very long. The government needs to have an ability for the stakeholders to come and talk about why they recommended a certain course of action, why things aren't the way it was proposed, what things have made their way into Bill 124 that were never contemplated or were out-and-out rejected, and have those amendments put and have them supported and have this bill work in a way that's going to promote public safety, efficiency in the building industry and a streamlined process.

I look forward to debating this bill at committee. I'm asking that all members support the amendments that I will be bringing at the committee stage, and I look forward to debating this both in committee and in third reading.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

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Mr Marchese: Excellent speech, member for Don Valley East. He covered a lot of ground, and a lot of it technical, because the concerns are technical in nature. He spoke to a lot of issues that I'm sure the association of municipalities has raised, and the Ontario Building Officials Association. They have a lot of concerns too. I'm convinced the Conservatives agree and share some of those concerns. The problem is that they're not standing up to share them with us.

Look, I believe—

Mr Hardeman: Frank Klees explained it all.

Mr Marchese: Frank explained it? Who explained it all?

Interjection: Forty minutes yesterday.

Mr Marchese: Forty minutes. But did you read the speech?

Mr Klees: No.

Mr Marchese: Yes, you did, Frankie.

Mr Klees: You weren't here.

Mr Marchese: Speaker, did he read his speech yesterday or did he just deliver it off by heart there?

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: He wasn't listening.

Mr Klees: Check Hansard.

Mr Marchese: But the member for Don Valley East raised a lot of technical issues that are critical. He says we need public hearings for—

Mr Klees: I'll send you the quotes.

Mr Marchese: I know. Of course you'll send me the quotes. I want to hear your passion coming out of your chest from time to time.

But my question to the member for Don Valley East: it is my understanding that the province and municipalities are exempt from any legal liability over anything done by the registered code agencies. This may encourage the municipalities, of course, to avoid responsibility by using these registered code agencies, if that is so. I'm not quite sure; I believe that to be the case. You may know. If you do, please respond to that. What you said earlier wasn't quite what I'm saying at the moment and it would be

useful for the public to be able to have a better understanding of that.

Mr Dunlop: It's a pleasure to rise here tonight and make a few comments. It's interesting, on the registered code agencies—I understand from my interpretation of the act that a registered code agency is completely optional to the municipality. That's the first thing we have to make clear here. I don't know how many times we have to say that, but it is an optional process.

There's something I think both opposition parties should be aware of, and maybe they are, maybe they're not—

Interjections.

Mr Dunlop: Will you guys be quiet for a second so I can talk? I can't talk.

Prior to 1985, septic system inspections across the province were done either by the board of health or by the Ministry of the Environment. In my particular area of Simcoe county—I live quite close to the Muskoka area—in 1985, there was a gentleman, I think his name was Bradley, who might have been the Minister of the Environment for the Liberal government. They introduced a program, which by the way was followed during the previous years by someone named Grier, that allowed private engineering companies to eliminate all the employees of the Ministry of the Environment and inspect the septic systems in areas covered by the Minister of the Environment. Those are our lakes and our water; those are our septic systems in our cottages and our homes all through the north. That happened. That's a kind of registered code agency, but that wasn't optional. They implemented that program 100%, the environment employees lost their jobs and private companies took over on one-year contracts. I don't know how many people are aware of that, but that's a fact of life. That happened. That's basically a registered code agency. I have no idea now why, when something is optional to a municipality, there's so much dissension, so much worry, so much fearmongering. Again, I say the sky is falling. Chicken Little is over there.

Mr Kennedy: Again we have an inkling of why the government could only muster two minutes. They simply sing the same sad song. There was a grunt or a groan that said, "More bureaucracy." Well, this is a problem for the members who have it in their head that that's the only frame of reference.

Actually making the system work is the job, guys. It's not just about whether or not there's more bureaucracy, and in the days of Walkerton you'd better not be so glib about it, because they expect from us, all of us in this House, a higher standard. When the members opposite talk about, a little too glibly, this idea of having these things here, when you talk about what's going to be optional for municipalities in the future, something our member didn't even mention yet is that it's going to be optional for them to check the work of those code agencies. Once they check the work of those code agencies, they get some of the liability. But all through this piece, who doesn't get the liability? The provincial government

that wants to set up the rules. Again, we see at work this lazy, ideological mismanagement on the part of this government, who are unable to come to terms with the basic requirements of their responsibility.

But it's not for me to make that judgment. There are many, many people out there who understand that in areas after areas they have, not flip-flops—as is often the parlance in this House—but just flops, just absolute disasters of things that should be made to work but instead they don't work, over and over again. We're headed for another one here, where the government will set up a system where inspections will be at the desire of the developer chosen, the agency, the company, and the means and the method eventually would be dictated by the industry. It's not something that should be put in the hands of the industry.

If this passes, we'll eventually be back in this House with the industry asking us to change it, because people will lose confidence. That's the price of laziness, ideology and mismanagement.

Ms Churley: I know you're looking forward to hearing what I have to say, as always.

Mr Wetlaufer: That's why I came down here.

Ms Churley: I'm sure it is.

I listened to the member for Don Valley East. It's clear that he's done his homework, or he's got a really good staff person who did his homework, because he's clearly read the bill. He talked about some of the technical details tonight. I'm sure he'll tell us he did all the work himself.

One of the things that struck me when the member for Don Valley East was talking—and we've pointed this out as well—is this is not just the opposition talking. If you don't want to listen to us—and we know you don't. You make that pretty obvious every day, all the time.

Mr Dunlop: I listen to you all the time.

Ms Churley: You should more often, because you wouldn't be in such trouble right now.

The Ontario Building Officials Association and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, two organizations you have some close ties with from time to time, that come out and support you in certain areas, are telling you—and the member for Don Valley East is pointing out to you tonight that those two organizations know this issue inside out—better, I'm sure, than anybody in this Legislature except maybe for Michael Prue, who has been mayor of East York and really understands this issue very well. It's a very complex issue. These people understand what they're talking about. They are telling you that this bill badly needs amendments, that they're very concerned with the content of the bill as it now stands. They want an opportunity for hearings and an opportunity to make those amendments. That's what the member for Don Valley East is telling you tonight. So if you don't want to listen to us, listen to them. Have hearings.

Mr Caplan: I want to thank the members for Trinity-Spadina, Simcoe North, Parkdale-High Park and Toronto-Danforth for their comments.

I would say to the member for Trinity-Spadina, yes, his comments are true. However, if there is even the most minimal of involvement by a municipality at any step of the way, they assume a significant share of the liability. That will cause municipalities to be totally uninvolved.

Ms Churley: Why is that dangerous?

Mr Caplan: Why is that dangerous? Well, a municipality is a neutral third party.

I would say as well to my colleague from Toronto-Danforth that I had the very able assistance of my assistant, Hillary Dawson. She was very helpful. I want to congratulate her. She's a tremendous resource, as was the Ontario Building Officials Association. I sat down and talked to them. They laid out their concerns in a very thoughtful manner.

Mr Marchese: Did they talk to the government?

Mr Caplan: They talked to the government. They were part of BRRAG. They were a part of the expert panel that put together the foundation for the work.

Mr Marchese: So what happened?

Mr Caplan: That's the question I have. What happened? Why did the government reject many of the recommendations their own experts offered to them as a comprehensive package, and how did some of the other things get in the bill that were either rejected or never supported by their own experts? That's a very good question. How did that happen? Why did that happen and what can we do about it? We could make this a very strong bill to protect the people of Ontario, to streamline building activity in the province. The way it stands now, Bill 124 cannot be supported, but it could be and I hope it will be with some amendments.

2120

Mr Marchese: It's good to have this opportunity to speak. I never lose an opportunity in this House. I would never lose an opportunity to speak. It's the only time we've got as members to be able to say what we want to say. Why would you government members be shackled by your leaders, when I know so many of you want to speak to this bill and so many other bills? Yet the House leader or the whip or the Premier is saying, "Don't say anything tonight," and the whole mass of you, the whole group of you, say, "OK." How could you do that? This is your place, your assembly, your opportunity to be able to speak and represent your constituents. Isn't that true, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker: The member should express his comments through the Speaker, please.

Mr Marchese: I understand. With my omnipotent view, I can see you and them and the public at the same time, all at once.

Take the opportunity, I say to you too, Speaker, when you're over there with them, to speak to your public, whoever they may be, so they know what you're thinking and what you're feeling. I certainly take my time. I wouldn't sit around here and yap, yap, yap or read or go eat some cookies in the back. I'd be here waiting for the moment to debate; that's what I would do.

Some people are for, some people are against, and in this particular instance I am with two organizations that

want to speak to you directly. They are the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario building inspectors' association. I am with them at this moment in allowing them the opportunity to be able to speak to you and us in committee directly.

It is a puzzling matter that the member from Don Valley East raises. That is, as he argued, if these associations were members of the group that originally put these recommendations together for you, why did you neglect or reject the proposals or suggestions made by them? It's a very curious thing. Normally, these are your buddies, and they really are. Even if you haven't included their points of view, they're still going to be your buddies. They are; I know that. But that's why I have a particular interest in listening to them.

I want to share the view that the member for Parkdale-High Park raised earlier on, because it was a social democratic point of view and I like that. We have something in common with him, at least in that regard. He was arguing, as I am about to argue, that public service is good and ought to be respected by you and us. We're talking about inspectors who deal with issues of buildings and building codes. These are the people who normally tell you, when you go to apply for an extension of your home or to build a new home, because you people can afford that—you've got to go through these inspectors, or probably you hire the guys with the big bucks to do it for you. But you've still got to go through the city inspectors to get what you want. You won't be able to build according to your wishes, but you've got to build according to the law. The inspectors are there to protect you and me and all of our communities with respect to the law on building codes. That's what they are there for, and they are an assiduous group who do their job very diligently and do the job that is required of them by law.

I am convinced that inspectors hired by the city are less corruptible, if not incorruptible. It is quite possible that some could be corrupted by pecuniary interests. It's possible. No one is infallible in this regard. I am convinced that city inspectors, on the whole, by and large, are incorruptible. I believe that. It's for that reason that I believe you've got to keep the system as it is.

Mr Hardeman: Surprise, surprise.

Mr Marchese: I know you're not surprised. Why would you be surprised? I know that.

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: You guys are the ones who don't like the system as it works because it's efficient. You want to corrupt it. You want to corrupt—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Pull yourselves together. Grab a hold of yourselves.

Mr Marchese: I realize that the system works well, and what they want to do is corrupt it. In order to deal with the status quo, they have to change it. How do they change it? By saying—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: What am I missing here? Am I speaking the wrong language? Pull yourselves together.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Speaker, for the severity with which you addressed some of the nuisances on your side of the bench.

We know that the current system works well. We know, as my friend Michael Prue from Beaches-East York pointed out the other day, the system is a very efficient one. While it is true that in May, June, July, August and September there is a peak of applications and therefore city staff are stressed with applications, good mayors, like the member for Beaches-East York, make it work. They find a way to make it work. That is why, as he pointed out, construction happened in his part of the world.

Mr Caplan: In North York.

Mr Marchese: No, not in North York—well, it might have been. But the member from Beaches-East York, while he was the mayor of East York, had a great deal of construction in his riding, versus Scarborough and versus, I believe, North York as well—

Mr Caplan: You're wrong about that.

Mr Marchese: —although it might not have been; I don't know—because of the leadership that people like him took. You can make the current system work if you want to. If it is inefficient, you make it work. But why would it be inefficient? Because people make application

in peak months like May, June, July, August and September. So what does the city need in those particular peak months? It needs money to hire more staff to deal with those applications that come in in those warm months. If you don't have the money, because Mike Harris has downloaded so much to the municipalities that they're starving for cash, you can't deal with those peak months of high building application changes that people are seeking. That's what it's about. The system is not difficult. The system has its burdens from time to time.

In the minute that remains, Speaker—I will resume the debate at the next opportune moment—I say that the system works well and it needs support. Cities need government funding. They need provincial money to support their good work and they need federal dollars to support them as well. Without it, they can't do the job. What does this government offer them? It offers them an optional program to privatize services so they can send out their work to private individuals who want to make money out of that kind of service. That's not the option people want. The municipalities want support and they're not getting it. But, Speaker, I will resume this debate at the next opportunity available.

The Acting Speaker: It being 9:30, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 next Monday, June 10, the birthday of my two sons.

The House adjourned at 2129.

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of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 37^e législature

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of Debates
(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 10 June 2002

Lundi 10 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 10 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 10 juin 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Today I again stand in my place and plead with the government to begin the four-laning of Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound. Last week I stood in the House and launched a petition campaign over the Internet. I must tell you that over the course of the last three days, these are just some of the petitions I've received from people like me who want the four-laning of Highway 69 to take place.

Again this weekend there were another two tragic deaths along that stretch of highway. There was a chemical spill south of Sudbury. The government must understand, it is time for this government to understand, that the four-laning of that section between Sudbury and Parry Sound is a necessity. It is an economic lifeline for the people in northern Ontario. But right now, Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound is a dangerous stretch of highway. Statistics indicate that.

I say on behalf of the people I represent, in the riding of Sudbury and the community of Sudbury, who want a loud voice to speak for them, you must four-lane Highway 69 from Sudbury. You must commit some money in the budget next week to four-laning that highway from Sudbury to Parry Sound. To do anything else is to continue the carnage and the deaths along that road, and that's not acceptable to anyone.

VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTRE

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): The Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo tells me that in the area they serve, over 10,000 volunteers donate more than one million hours of their time each year. As such, it's abundantly clear that the Volunteer Action Centre plays an instrumental role in supporting volunteer services for my riding of Waterloo-Wellington. That is why, when they asked me to make a statement to recognize volunteerism, I readily agreed.

The Volunteer Action Centre provides three core services, which include encouraging and facilitating community volunteerism, providing community agencies with recruitment services and providing education and training in volunteer management and board management.

Recently they informed me that since April 1999, they have been working closely with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and the Waterloo Region District School Board to help high school students fulfill their 40 hours of community involvement that they are expected to do in order to graduate. The Volunteer Action Centre has developed a resource that will assist teachers, guidance counsellors, students and their parents in finding a volunteer opportunity. That resource binder lists 200 opportunities, many of which can accommodate youth volunteers. Opportunities were listed under nine categories of interest, including sports and recreation; arts and music; short-term and special events; clerical; food services and retail; children and youth; health; public relations; and handyperson.

The Volunteer Action Centre also tells me that one third of the individuals they see are 25 years of age or under. Their hope is that these individuals will have a positive experience and will continue to volunteer throughout their lives.

All members should share that hope, and agree that this approach truly captures the spirit of the community involvement program, which could well serve as a model for other school boards in the province.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On May 30, this government signed a deal with the federal government regarding housing. When you cut through the headlines and the rhetoric, you realize this deal is a total abandonment of people who need affordable housing in Ontario.

Look at the numbers. In Hamilton, there's a need right now for 775 units per year. At best, this deal will provide 700 units over four years while we have a waiting list of 3,600 families. Halton has had 2,300 families on its waiting list for up to seven years. This deal is only going to build a total of 400 units. London needs 700 units per year over the next 10 years. This deal would build 400.

When you look at it across the province, the government of Ontario sold out when signing this bad deal. Frankly, they did not put out one new cent. Part of the deal was going to be matching federal funds. The federal government came to the table with \$245 million and the provincial government did not put in one cent of new money. They downloaded the responsibility to municipalities. They took advantage of municipal tax grants. They took advantage of programs already in place but did not put in one new cent.

While this need continues to grow worse every day across the province, I'm embarrassed that this government has signed that deal. Frankly, I'm embarrassed that the federal Liberals went along with the charade of this provincial government to look like they're actually taking action and doing something about affordable housing, which is a total joke. It's a sad joke because many people in Ontario need help and don't get it. Shame on this government for signing that deal and shame on the federal government for being partners with you in this outrageous scam on people in Ontario who need housing.

HUNTING AND FISHING

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Again last week the government demonstrated, by way of time allocation on the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act, its disregard for the angling community and the First Nations people across this province.

I've had the opportunity to go back to my constituency and the greater constituency of northeastern Ontario and speak to a number of people in regard to this issue. They can't understand why the government would not accept the amendments that were put forward by the NDP caucus that would have done essentially two things: first of all, to give the bill some ability to respond to the needs of anglers and hunters. Most people understand this legislation for what it is: it's a great big group hug from the Conservative government, saying to the angling community on the one hand, by the title of the bill, that they love them, but when you look at the details of the bill, it does absolutely nothing. People understand this bill says that you basically do what you do now and you've got nothing more than what you used to have.

In regard to the First Nations communities, there is a huge amount of, I would say, hurt and anger toward this government from the leadership that I spoke to through the James Bay area and all the way through NAN up into Thunder Bay. They are saying, "Why is this government not accepting an NDP amendment that would have put a non-derogation clause into this bill?" I send you messages back from Chief Ignace Gull, Chief Stan Beardy, Chief Theresa Hall and a number of other people I talked to, who called me—I didn't call them—with the anger they show toward this government. They say if you truly believe this bill does nothing to you, why don't you then accept the NDP amendment to a non-derogation clause?

IAN ANDERSON HOUSE

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I recently had the opportunity to visit Ian Anderson House, Ontario's first freestanding in-resident cancer hospice. Actually it's in Oakville, which is the riding of our honourable Speaker Gary Carr. This six-bed hospice provides quality end-of-life care, without charge, for residents of Halton and Peel regions in a home-like

environment. The hospice also supports the whole family as a unit.

One of the residents I visited with, Mr Donald Bennett, regularly watches the proceedings of the Ontario Legislature on TV and will be watching us today. As I promised you, Mr Bennett, I am waving "hello."

Ian Anderson House is named in memory of Ian Anderson, who was diagnosed with cancer in 1987 and who died at home, as was his wish, in 1990. Funding for the creation of Ian Anderson House came from the Anderson family through the Ian Anderson House Foundation. This outstanding hospice, working in partnership with the community care access centre, provides nursing and homemaking support and round-the-clock staffing by palliative care professionals, supported by trained volunteers.

The hospice philosophy of care understands the value of attending to emotional, social and spiritual, as well as physical, needs. When recovery is no longer possible, compassionate care directed toward improving the quality of life becomes critically important.

I would like to commend the Anderson family for its vision in founding a cancer hospice for our community. We also owe our gratitude to the many volunteers and financial donors who support Ian Anderson House.

1340

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I rise today to report on Ontario Liberal hearings that many of my colleagues held this morning with parents from schools this government is shutting down with its provincial school closing policy. Parents from schools in diverse places such as Blytheswood, Port Colborne, Toronto and Sarnia made an appeal for the schools that have been sentenced by the incredible policies of this government. "The provincial funding formula is responsible for having boards make asinine decisions," according to Toronto parent Henry Gluch of St Aloysius school.

These nine schools put their finger on what's happening to students around the province. Hundreds of kids are being put on to buses for the first time, some for as long as an hour, due to the shutdown of the neighbourhood school. The so-called local process for school closings is actually a provincial template that makes a mockery out of local input.

The poor long-term decisions were exemplified by Blytheswood school near Leamington, where the government will pay \$188,000 a year to build an extension on another school just to save the local school board \$100,000.

Ironically, almost every one of the schools that were here today could claim a record as an excellent school, including one that was featured in Maclean's magazine as one of the best in the province, according to the province's own school testing authority, and another one called a gem by the EQAO. These are the schools that don't even get to ask the question: why, Conservative

government, are you shutting down good schools in Ontario?

TOURISM IN PARRY SOUND-MUSKOKA

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Most of Ontario enjoyed some gorgeous weather this past weekend, marking the beginning of the busy summer tourism season.

In Parry Sound-Muskoka, our government's tourism marketing campaign appears to be paying dividends. Local resorts such as Muskoka Sands in Gravenhurst, Holiday Inn on Lake Muskoka, Grandview near Huntsville, Rocky Crest and Sherwood Inn on Lake Joseph are reporting positive signs for an exceptional year.

There has been a huge expansion in the facilities and in the choice of activities we have to offer in Parry Sound-Muskoka. Golf course development over the last five years has given us some fabulous courses: Rocky Crest, Bigwin Island, Taboo in Gravenhurst, which Mike Weir named as his home course just last week, and the Mark O'Meara course in Huntsville, to name only a few. Muskoka is fast becoming North America's next great golf destination. With its rugged lands and beautiful scenery, golfing in Muskoka is an extraordinary experience.

The unique features of Georgian Bay, along with the outstanding provincial parks in the area, are great natural attractions that offer many adventure sports opportunities.

As this vitally important industry gets underway for the summer season, I invite all residents of Ontario to rediscover Parry Sound-Muskoka, where there is a growing range of attractions. I am confident we have something for everyone.

RADIOLOGY SERVICES

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): We were happy last week to assist the Ontario Association of Radiologists to release publicly their findings from a survey of 32 hospitals across Ontario.

Most of the survey results of these hospitals suggest and clearly indicate that diagnostic testing across the board is woefully inadequate in terms of how timely access can be achieved by patients. Some 95% of all diagnostic testing done at these sites is in fact delayed weeks and weeks, far longer than what they consider to be medically appropriate.

One of these areas in particular is Peterborough. I suggest that the Minister of Health would prefer to go to Peterborough to find out why so many of these individuals are waiting weeks and weeks for diagnostic testing. The excuse the minister gave in the House last week, choosing to attack me personally instead of referring to what the problems are there—he suggested that all emergency care can get right in the door. Of course that has never changed. Emergency cases always jump the queue. It's people who are considered non-emergency,

which is the lion's share of people receiving diagnostic testing, who wait weeks and weeks, much longer than is considered medically appropriate.

Shame on the member from that area and shame on the Minister of Health for not addressing real issues in diagnostic testing.

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF WATERLOO REGION

Mr Wayne Wettkaufer (Kitchener Centre): On June 6, 2002, an annual Evening of Excellence was hosted by Junior Achievement of the Waterloo region, a community-based hands-on educational organization for high school students who wish to take on the experience of starting up a business and carrying out all the responsibilities while still in school.

Junior Achievement has been operating locally in the Waterloo region for 31 years, for 46 years nationally and for 81 years internationally. It is funded by the private sector, service clubs and individuals. Programs are operated in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Elmsira, St Jacobs and New Hamburg and they involve students from communities such as Petersburg, Baden and Breslau.

Thursday's event recognized students who provided exceptional leadership throughout the year. I'd like to take this time to recognize some of those students and their companies. The NCR award in production was awarded to the Candy Corp; company of the year was awarded to Simply Irresistible; most valuable graduating achiever of the year was awarded to Ling Sun from Schmidl and Sun Bank; salesperson of the year was awarded to two achievers, Meagan Steg and Rose Harvey from Simply Irresistible; and president of the year was awarded to Mike Howanyk of Simply Irresistible.

Congratulations to all achievers and their respective companies for another successful year, and my thanks to all those who volunteered their time and resources to give students some true hands-on learning. That type of learning is unmatchable.

VISITORS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Speaker: In the gallery today we have a very special visitor, Ursula Feige, who has brought her grandson, Steven Weir, who wants to be in my place one day. But I reminded him that it will be over there someday. So get ready for it, Steven; it's coming.

Steven is studying politics in grade 5 and wanted to visit us here. We welcome them. Thank you very much for being here with us.

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the gallery we have a contingent from the Portuguese community. We have the president of the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals and lots of people from the Portuguese com-

munity. I would like to welcome them today on Portugal Day.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We welcome our honoured guests.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I would ask all members to join me in welcoming our new group of pages. Our new group includes Kyle Ahluwalia from Beaches-East York; Andrei Bajenov from York Centre; Samantha Belaire from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke; Selena den Dunnen from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh; Holly Garnett from Nipissing; Mackenzie Green from Peterborough; Colin Heics from Mississauga West; Lauren Jackson from Burlington; Matthew Kersten from Brant; Mini Mazumdar from Oakville; Peter Michel from Oshawa; Lindsey O'Brien from Niagara Centre; Sean O'Connell from Oxford; Jordan Paolucci from Etobicoke North; Jaclyn Raymond from Parkdale-High Park; Lisa Robinson from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound; Sarah Suh from Etobicoke-Lakeshore; Stephanie Whittamore from Markham; Lara Yeo from Eglinton-Lawrence; and Andrew Zmiyiwsky from Kenora-Rainy River.

Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Smitherman, George
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kennedy, Gerard	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Stewart, R. Gary
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Stockwell, Chris
Crozier, Bruce	Mariand, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cunningham, Dianne	Martinuk, Gerry	Tsoubouchi, David H.
Curling, Alvin	Maves, Bart	Tumbull, David
DeFaria, Carl	McDonald, Al	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted	Wilson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Ecker, Janet	Mushinski, Marilyn	
Elliott, Brenda	Newman, Dan	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martin, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 79; the nays are 8.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, June 10, Tuesday, June 11, Wednesday, June 12, and Thursday, June 13, 2002, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized but the Clerk.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PORtUGUESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): It is my great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to the Celebration of Portuguese Heritage Act, 2001.

June 2001 was the first official Portuguese History and Heritage Month and today is the first official Portugal Day in Ontario.

I want to acknowledge the support of all the members in this House, the House leaders of every party that support the unanimous passage of Bill 120, the bill that proclaimed the month of June as Portuguese History and Heritage Month and today, June 10, as Portugal Day.

This is a great day for every Ontarian of Portuguese descent. Indeed, it is a great day for all Ontarians.

This government took the initiative to recognize and celebrate the vast diversity of citizens in this province with the introduction of this legislation.

We took the lead in embracing the diversity that is all around us. Diversity is one of Ontario's strengths, and I invite all honourable members and all Ontarians to join me in celebrating that diversity through the history and heritage and culture of Ontarians of Portuguese descent.

The deep historical roots and the ongoing contributions to Canada by Ontarians of Portuguese background make the case for this very special recognition com-

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Flaherty, Jim	O'Toole, John
Amott, Ted	Galt, Doug	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Emie
Bartolucci, Rick	Gilchrist, Steve	Patten, Richard
Beaubien, Marcel	Gill, Raminder	Peters, Steve
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Boyer, Claudette	Hastings, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hodgson, Chris	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Runciman, Robert W.
Caplan, David	Hudak, Tim	Ruprecht, Tony
Christopherson, David	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Sergio, Mario

memorating Portuguese heritage and its contribution to the mosaic of this society.

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Portugal played a pioneering and leading international role in the explorations of the New World in the 15th and 16th centuries. Those connections contributed to the passing from an age of closed worlds into an age of global societies.

Canada's historical ties with the Portuguese community run just as deep. Gaspar Corte Real, together with Giovanni Caboto, or John Cabot, as he is known to most Canadians, was one of the earliest explorers in Canada. His work heralds Canada's beginning as a multicultural nation.

For the past 500 years, people of Portuguese descent have settled and made their homes here in Ontario and they have made significant contributions to the growth of this nation and of this province. For example, when mail service was first established in 1693, it was a Portuguese man, Pedro da Silva, who transported and delivered mail by canoe between Montreal and Quebec City.

The Portuguese-Canadian community in Ontario is vibrant and continues to make many contributions to our society and to enrich Ontario with its history, its culture and its language, and also, and very important, with its work ethic.

I just want to briefly highlight our government's record on a couple of initiatives that are important to members of the Portuguese community who have joined us today in the members' gallery. In fact, these are investments in diversity, programs that will help newcomers to this province become productive working members of our communities and become integrated as quickly as possible.

I am, of course, speaking of our English-as-a-second-language training programs and other educational supports to our diverse population. We have increased funding to Ontario school boards for English as a second language since the introduction of student-focused funding in 1998-99. In fact, for 2002-03, the funding for ESL is projected to rise to \$168.5 million, an increase of \$57 million or more than 50% compared to ESL funding prior to 1998.

In addition to ESL funding, boards can now use funding from the demographic component of the learning opportunities grant to help students from immigrant backgrounds. That funding has been enhanced by \$50 million for the 2002-03 year. In total, the demographic component will increase to a projected funding of \$203.9 million.

We are also providing \$17.2 million through the continuing education and other program grants for international languages for elementary students.

Our government is providing a major increase of about \$350 million in new funding to Ontario's public schools for the 2002-03 school year.

This investment in Ontario's students increases our government's total spending on public education from \$13.86 billion to a record \$14.21 billion for the coming

school year. These are investments that reach to the very heart of our ethnic communities: strong educational supports that provide the kind of support that newcomers to this province need.

The month of June and the day of June 10 in particular have always been a great time of celebration in the Portuguese community. The celebrations honour the life of 16th-century poet Luis de Camões and his famous poems, the Lusiads, with cultural performances, history seminars, poem recitals, street parades and many other activities. June 10 is the anniversary of the death of Luis de Camões.

The strong communities of Ontarians of Portuguese descent number nearly half a million people. Ontarians of Portuguese background are proud Canadians and they participate fully in our society. They are forever grateful for the warm welcome they have received through the centuries. The celebration of the great cultural and historical heritage that the Portuguese bring is an integral piece of the cultural mosaic that makes Canada so wonderful and so great.

I invite all members of this House to join me in celebrating the wonderful contributions of Ontarians of Portuguese descent, and I invite all honourable members, indeed all Ontarians, to get out and join the festivities this month in communities throughout the province, because in our community we welcome, we are very inclusive, just like all the other communities in Ontario, and we are so proud of belonging to this great society.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party, I'm delighted to rise to recognize an important date celebrated as Portugal National Day since 1880.

In the galleries are a number of distinguished local representatives, but they also come from pretty far away—from Ontario, they come as far away as Thunder Bay and Windsor and Ottawa, all over Ontario. In fact, some come from as far as Portugal to celebrate today, the national day of Portugal.

Even the President of the Azores has come to help us celebrate. His name is Dr Carlos Manuel do Vale César, and he has made a special request. That request has been that he would like all Ontarians to join in helping to celebrate this special day, because he feels—his English is perfect—a very special tie with this place called Toronto and this province called Ontario. He is saying to all Portuguese Canadians, "Let's join in and celebrate a very special day," Luis de Camões day.

The celebration of the national day of Portugal is special and unique in the pages of history. Unlike some dates that commemorate an important political event such as a declaration of independence, on this historic occasion we ask the people of Ontario to join our Canadians of Portuguese heritage in the remembrance of a great world-renowned poet and writer, Luis de Camões. Although he passed away more than 400 years ago, Camões left a living legacy of meaningful poetry of immortal beauty that has not withered with age.

We are all cognizant and appreciative of the tremendous contributions that Portuguese Canadians have made

to the development and growth of our province and country both in the economic and cultural fields, yet as important as these economic contributions are, the attention of Canadian Portuguese children today is focused not on the prosperity and wealth that opportunity in Canada brings, but on our democratic system of government, which allows the people of our multicultural society of Ontario to celebrate a national literary hero of their forefathers' original homeland as a right. Indeed, Luis de Camões is an intellectual giant whose footsteps have crossed centuries of time and crossed the Atlantic Ocean to implant into Canada a great heritage of love for literature, for poetry and education. But today we are cognizant of, especially as we raise the colours of Portugal and the national flag, the Portuguese community and its tremendous impact on all facets of Ontario life. Whether it's in economy, culture, commerce or the arts, we find that Portuguese Canadians have contributed a great deal.

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It is just as important, when we see the flag raised today at 11 o'clock and the colours of Portugal, to note that upon the shoulders of Portuguese Canadians rests a special responsibility: to ensure that their children are also knowledgeable about their history and about their country and about their culture and about their language. To them I say today [remarks in Portuguese].

As we, together, join as Canadians and Canadians of Portuguese background, we know that today we are building a new country right across the globe known as Canada, a country of free men and free women, a country where there is unlimited possibility in terms of economic growth and freedom.

On this special day I congratulate the minister, but above all else I congratulate these Canadians of Portuguese background who have made time today to join us in this gallery to ensure that everyone knows, not just Portuguese Canadians but everyone, that the work ethic is strong, that together they have a great sense of faith in their church and in their God, and that they have a very strong sense of family. To them I say congratulations [remarks in Portuguese].

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further responses?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I too am very proud, as a New Democrat and proud to represent all New Democrats, to celebrate Portugal Day. We say proudly, again reminding those who are watching, that New Democrats gave their unanimous consent for the Celebration of Portuguese Heritage Act, 2001. There were some unsteady moments during those days, and New Democrats were here, ready and willing to celebrate and give consent to your bill, Carl.

Portuguese Canadians today were proudly raising their flags on College Street, on Dundas Street, I suspect even in Brampton and in Hamilton. It was, with all due respect to Mr Ruprecht, a wonderful victory for Portugal. It was a wonderful soccer game, which I enjoyed. They played beautifully. I'm a fan of soccer and I suspect there are many fans of soccer, and I wanted to tell you that in the

reception we had today at Queen's Park the excitement of Portuguese Canadians was palpable. It was not just to celebrate Portugal Day but to celebrate the victory of the Portugal team in that wonderful—

Interjection: What about the Poles?

Mr Marchese: That's why I said, "With all due respect to Mr Ruprecht." The Poles did not do very well.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Today.

Mr Marchese: Today, but there's always another day.

I wanted to congratulate and thank the Consul General, Dr Joao Perestrello, because he is finishing his term. He's had close to his four years, and it's amazing how times flies. But I wanted to praise his work because I think the community is quite proud of what he has done for Portuguese Canadians—an indefatigable worker, great representation by a Consul General, whom I wanted to thank on behalf of all Portuguese Canadians. Carl, I think that was worthy of mentioning today because he may be leaving September, October; I don't know.

Second, I wanted to congratulate the president and the members of the Alliance of Portuguese Clubs and Associations of Ontario. They have pulled together Portugal Week activities in ways that need to be acknowledged and recognized, without which these activities that we celebrate, in particular the parade that begins on Lansdowne and ends at the centre of my riding, would not have happened. It's a celebration bringing together thousands and thousands of people along Dundas Street to share in the pride of Portugal Day and the pride of being Portuguese Canadians. I am happy to say I've lived in this riding most of my life and lived closely connected to the Portuguese community, and the parade is the height of all of those activities.

I want to say as well that there is a new committee that has been formed to celebrate the 50 years of official immigration of Portuguese Canadians. I know they have come before, but this will be the official date that has been selected. This group will be the umbrella group co-ordinating all the activities across Canada in a way that everybody will know, through the Web site and a calendar, through newsletters and other means, the events that will be held. This group is working very hard and very closely together to bring about in 2003 a whole series of events across Canada that Portuguese Canadians can be proud of.

The Consul General spoke of this unity that we need to have as a community to be able to do the great things Portuguese Canadians do. In fact it's that unity he talked about—that we saw in the Portuguese team today in their victory of 4 to 0—that is expected and called upon of them in the next year as we celebrate these activities. I believe that Portuguese Canadians are becoming incredibly active in the societal and political issues of the day that are making their presence felt here in Canada. It's that civic involvement that's manifesting itself in ways that I think Portuguese Canadians can be proud of. It's that civic involvement that will make all politicians accountable; not just a single politician, but all politicians.

I'm reminded by the member for Hamilton West that they celebrated Portugal Day activities at city hall this

past Saturday, and I'm sure other activities have happened throughout Ontario and Canada. I congratulate all of the communities working together to bring about and to show the pride of being who they are.

I congratulate the minister who, as a former member, brought together the bill of the Celebration of Portuguese Heritage Act. I think that was very good. Minister, you make some mention about increasing funding for international languages. I wouldn't go that far. This program is threatened with death unless your government puts some money into it to keep it alive. Please, I want to be nice to you, but we've seen a drop of 20% with ESL programs. I urge you to put money into it. Don't take money out of these programs—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the member's time is up. Responses are over.

MEMBER FOR ST CATHARINES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I seek unanimous consent to pay tribute to Jim Bradley, the member for St Catharines, on the occasion of his 25 years here in the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. We will begin the rotation.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): This is a wonderful opportunity for us in this Legislature to recognize a truly extraordinary accomplishment. Jim Bradley, the member for St Catharines, has been serving his constituents for a quarter of a century.

Holding down any job for 25 years is noteworthy. Holding down a job for that long in our just-in-time world, where the only constant is change, is remarkable, but holding on to the same political seat for 25 years is nothing short of spectacular.

Speaker, I'm sure you will agree with me when I say that many people are cynical when it comes to politics and politicians, and on top of that there is much less party loyalty than there used to be. So to hold the same seat for 25 years or, to put it another way, to win seven successive elections, speaks volumes about the high regard in which Jim is held by his constituents. I can assure you that the feeling is mutual. Jim Bradley is as committed to his constituents today as he was when he was first elected by them in 1977.

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Hansard is replete with his questions, his statements, his speeches and his rather creative way to make interventions on behalf of his constituents. I can tell you that Jim Bradley is one of the most grounded politicians I know.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Did you say well-rounded or well-grounded?

Mr McGuinty: For purposes of clarification, I did not say "rounded"; I said "grounded."

One of the most remarkable aspects of Jim Bradley is that he knows what his constituents are thinking at all times. Many of us struggle to make a guess in terms of where they are at as we consider some of the issues of the

day, but Jim Bradley is well plugged in to his constituency and his constituents and he fully understands where they're at. He understands their hopes and their fears and he has never, ever allowed some of the trappings of power and the privileges of public office to come between him and his constituents.

Jim Bradley has served our party, the Ontario Liberal Party, very well over the years but especially so in his capacities as our interim leader, our House leader and as our Minister of the Environment. I say without reservation, Jim Bradley is the best Minister of the Environment who has ever graced this Legislature.

It's easy to forget some of his accomplishments, and I'll only list three. He brought in the blue box program. He first recognized and decided it was so important to address acid rain in the province of Ontario. Also—this is something that goes too frequently unmentioned—he led to a tremendous growth in green industries, which was a tremendous addition to our economy.

Today, of course, he serves as our environment critic, but maybe a better way to phrase that is, he remains an outstanding advocate on behalf of our environment.

The people of St Catharines are lucky to have Jim Bradley as their representative. Our party is lucky to have him as one of our members. This House is lucky to have him as one of our 103 MPPs. Quite simply, Jim Bradley gives politicians a good name and he's been doing it for some 25 years.

On behalf of my party, I say to my colleague, my friend Jim Bradley, congratulations and thank you very much.

Applause.

Mr Kormos: I'm pleased I won the competition in this caucus to speak to Jim Bradley's 25 years, quarter century, in this Legislature, especially because I'm speaking not only for myself and the caucus but I do speak today for Mel Swart. He was my predecessor, the member for Welland-Thorold for 12 years, 13 years, until he retired and I had the good fortune to be elected. Both Mel and I—and I want everyone to know this—have a 25-year history of being able to work with Jim Bradley in Niagara region. I was able to work with him much better when he was a member of the opposition than when he was a member of government, but nonetheless able to work with Jim Bradley.

I speak in tribute to him with affection and regard by this caucus and by a whole lot of people down in Niagara region.

Jim and I had a far better rapport, I suspect, before the ridings were redistributed. Of course, upon redistribution I acquired—and I'm grateful—the good folks in south St Catharines. What that meant is that, contrary to how it occurred in the past, where Jim had the St Catharines Standard as his exclusive domain and I had the Welland Tribune, the Thorold News and the Pelham News, Jim now has to share the St Catharines Standard with me.

From time to time, Jim has worked on issues that have resulted in the Standard having some modest headline making reference to my having raised in the House x, y

President Reagan should not have had the American troops at that time stationed in Lebanon." They were very vulnerable and it was a very difficult time. I had to show them that it wasn't President Reagan; it was President Eisenhower that I had the headline from. American troops had landed in Lebanon in July 1958. I had that newspaper. It just happened to be in one corner of the basement at the time. So I've always believed that you should never throw out something that some day you might just need somehow. That's why there's some of that material around.

Mr Speaker, former Mr Speaker and other Mr Speakers who may be anywhere around today, I appreciate your tolerance in allowing some of the bending of the rules when there's a speech on about an agriculture matter or another matter and I get up and ask why the speaker didn't mention the need for another MRI in St Catharines or something of that nature, or something to do with ophthalmologists. I appreciate that tolerance. Our Speakers play an important role in our House and I've really appreciated Speakers over the years who have been tolerant of some of us. I haven't even been thrown out in 25 years in this House. That's not something I guess I should brag about, but—

Interjection: We can fix that.

Mr Bradley: That could be fixed.

We all play a role for all Ontario but ultimately each one of us is elected from our individual constituencies, and those are the people to whom we must ultimately answer.

In talking about the Legislature, I tell my own constituents, "You people may be totally shocked, but not all of the good ideas in this world emanate from inside the confines of the Ontario Legislature," and of course they are completely shocked when they hear that. That's why we, as legislators, invite their input, as we should.

The last observation I would have, as a personal observation, is that in our society there are many powerful people out there who, through position, are powerful and in many cases earn that position, and there are many people who are extremely wealthy. Those are individuals who really don't need us that much. We must be cognizant of what they say but they don't need us. Ultimately we are elected to speak for people who cannot speak for themselves. When we do that, we are doing our job appropriately.

I thank all members of the Legislature for your kind remarks, for your good friendship over the years. Like my friend Norm Sterling, there is still fire in the belly and in my case, there's even more belly to have fire in.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Pursuant to the notice I gave you earlier today, I rise now to address a matter under the provisions of standing order 21.

I regret that I must bring this matter to your attention today. For reasons that are yet to be determined but

readily inferred, the Minister of Energy has presented two directly contradictory facts about the same matter to this House. Hansard has recorded these statements and you have been provided with a copy of those Hansard transcripts.

It's our position that this conduct is inconsistent with the standards of the House and the standards that the public expects from the members of this House. Accordingly, I put to you that it is open to you to find the Minister of Energy in *prima facie* contempt of this Legislature.

On June 5, 2002, the minister, in response to a question in the House, stated that he learned of the outrageous Hydro One executive pay packages and informed the Premier about them back in April. The minister said at that time, and I quote, "When I got into the Ministry of Energy and they briefed me on these salaries, I went on the consultations, spoke to the Premier, said, 'We have to deal with this. These are excessive.'"

The minister assumed his responsibilities in April, I believe on April 15. Thus, his statement suggests clearly that he informed the Premier in April. That's a fact that the minister himself supported when speaking to reporters. He said, and I quote, "When I was made Minister of Energy, I acted on it right away." But then on Thursday, the minister contradicted himself. He said he didn't inform the Premier about the pay packages until a month later: "... around the second week of May, I discussed this with the Premier."

Earlier that same day, during media scrums in Guelph, the Premier clearly contradicted both statements. He said the minister did not inform him about the pay packages in April, but that's not all he said. He said the minister didn't inform him about the pay packages in May either. He says he only found out about the compensation packages from media reports, the first of which were published on May 16. The Premier said, "When this issue came to light in the media was when I first became aware of what these compensation packages were." He later told reporters he couldn't recall any briefing by the Minister of Energy.

On page 111 of the 22nd edition of Erskine May it states, "The Commons may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as a contempt." On page 141 of the 19th edition of Erskine May it states, "Conspiracy to deceive either House or any committees of either House will also be treated as a breach of privilege."

At page 234 of the second edition of Joseph Maingot's Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, it explains that in order for the Speaker to find a *prima facie* case in a matter involving a deliberate misleading statement, there must be "an admission by someone in authority, such as a minister of the crown or an officer of a department."

Speaker, we've got two contradictory statements by the minister recorded in Hansard: one from Wednesday, June 5, and one from Thursday, June 6. We have media reports of statements by the Premier that clearly indicate the minister may have been less than forthright in this

House not once but twice in regard to his statements about Hydro One pay packages and when he informed the Premier.

There is federal precedent for this. On January 31, 2002, federal member of Parliament Brian Pallister made a similar point of privilege about similar statements made inside and outside the House of Commons by Liberal cabinet minister Art Eggleton. As you're well aware, the Speaker in that case found there was indeed a *prima facie* case of privilege.

I submit to you that this is evidence of a *prima facie* case of contempt, and I have available the appropriate motion, should you so find.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member for his point of privilege.

The government House leader on the same point of privilege.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): To suggest there's a quantum leap here would be an understatement. At page 673 it suggests, "When I got into the Ministry of Energy and they briefed me on these salaries, I went on the consultations, spoke with the Premier, said, 'We have to deal with this. These are excessive.'" There's no date involved there, there's no mention of a date, there's no mention of a month. There's nothing. I don't know how you suggest that because I said that, somehow you're now nailing down an exact date that I suggested I spoke to anybody about this. It's patently absurd.

The Speaker: I thank the member for his input. I will certainly read Speaker Milliken's ruling and I will reserve my judgment and be back in the House with the results.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Minister of Education. Today in the gallery are parents from across Ontario representing at least 10 schools that are slated for closure. They are here specifically to ask for your help. They are asking that you impose a moratorium on school closures.

You will know, Minister, that last week I put forward a proposal that I called *Helping Kids Now* which calls for, in part, a moratorium until you have repaired your badly flawed funding formula. I am sure, Madam Minister, there is no disagreement with respect to the funding formula being badly flawed.

On behalf of these parents, I am asking you if you will do the right thing. Will you put a stop to school closures that are being driven not by a desire to improve learning but rather by a desire to save money at the expense of learning?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): The leader of the opposition obviously

does not understand that school closure decisions have always been the responsibility of local school boards. It is not a matter of the policy of this government.

In fact, I'd like to share with the members opposite the fact that between 1985 and 1990, when the Liberals were in power, 37 public and Catholic schools were closed in Toronto. Between 1995 and 2000, under our government, in comparison, there were not 37, but there were only 20 public and Catholic schools closed in Toronto.

I say to the member opposite, these are decisions that have always been made by local school boards based on the information they have about the needs in their community. I would recommend to you that you recognize that you closed schools for five years, almost twice the number.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, there's a difference and you know it. There's a difference between closing schools as a result of declining enrolment and closing schools because of your badly flawed funding formula. That's the difference. It is pure fiction to argue that in each and every instance today when boards are closing schools they're doing so freely and voluntarily. They are doing so because they are being driven by your badly flawed funding formula.

Let me tell you about some of the schools we are talking about here. In Sarnia, St Helen is slated for closure. That school is in good shape. Its junior kindergarten class is operating at capacity and this school is 90% full. In Port Colborne, Humberstone is on the chopping block. Let me tell you about that school. It has the highest grade 3 test results in the province. It's a one-floor school that is just barely 30 years old.

Your funding formula is destroying good community schools where good learning is taking place. Does it not make sense to impose a moratorium at least until you have reviewed and repaired your funding formula?

Hon Mrs Witmer: It has always been the responsibility of locally elected trustees on boards of education to make decisions as to when and why schools close and when and why new schools are built. I have just indicated that, under the Liberal government, boards made the decision 37 times to close schools here in Toronto. During the period of time when the Liberals were in power, there were only 176 new schools built; 37 closed in Toronto. During our time, 1995 to 2001, there have been 262 new schools built in this province.

Do you want to take all the autonomy away from locally elected school boards? School boards have made good decisions on behalf of their students.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, the parents here today did not come to hear you say you have absolutely no input into what's happening with respect to school closures around the province of Ontario today. They have already met with their trustees and other representatives at the local board. They are here today to ask for your help. They don't want some lecture about what happened in the last century. You've been in charge for seven years over there. It is your funding formula that is driving school closures in the province of Ontario. They're here

to ask for your help. They want to know whether or not you're going to help them. These are good schools where good learning is taking place. Your funding formula is closing small schools in particular, where studies are telling us very good learning is taking place.

There's a school in Bruce township called Bruce Township Central School that is slated for closure. It's the only school between Kincardine and Port Elgin. When it goes, kids are going to be bused to Kincardine or Port Elgin.

The parents here are from Sarnia, Toronto, Essex and Port Colborne. Again, on their behalf, I say to you, why not put in place a moratorium until you have reviewed and repaired your funding formula?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think it's very important to recognize and understand that school closings are always difficult issues. It is always very challenging. Our government has recognized that we do have schools that have declining enrolment and small populations. We have actually made more money available this year to those schools.

In fact, you mentioned that some of the parents here today are from Port Colborne. For the record, I just want to indicate that Tim Hudak, the MPP, has already made the previous minister aware of the fact that the parents are concerned with the funding formula and have the view that the board did not follow a fair process.

As I have said to you again, it is up to each board to determine how they deal with the building of new schools and the closings of others.

I would just like to quote you, Mr McGuinty. In November 1998, you said, "Well, you know, um, schools close and schools open on a fairly regular basis." You're right. School trustees have continued—it's a tough—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time is up.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): To the Minister of Energy: Deb Hutton was one of Mike Harris's and Ernie Eves's most trusted political advisors. In fact, she was at Ernie Eves's side when he won your party's leadership, and she was a senior member of his transition team.

Ms Hutton now also happens to be a vice-president at Hydro One. I'm sure you're familiar with that. How much money are Ontario ratepayers paying Deb Hutton?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I don't have any idea.

Mr McGuinty: The problem, Minister, is that you don't care, and you should. You should have that information. More importantly, so should Hydro's ratepayers, the people of Ontario. We can't get this information because of the blackout that your government imposed on Ontario Hydro's successor companies.

Today I'm asking for your support on two things: (1) a forensic audit to find out what Deb Hutton and others at

Hydro One are now making; and (2) I'm asking that we make Hydro One and all of Hydro's successor companies subject to freedom-of-information laws.

Will you support those two measures? Will you turn the lights on at Hydro?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The rationale behind the exclusion of this particular company from freedom-of-information laws is the same rationale used for the exclusion of Toronto Hydro—another good example of a company that is excluded from the FOIs. The fact of the matter is, if they're operating within the private sector, which they are, then it would be very simple for a competitor to file an FOI and find out exactly anything they want about the company.

Mr McGuinty: No, not "anything."

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, absolutely. Once you file under the FOI, you can file for virtually anything under that company's jurisdiction. Therefore, I think even you would concede that it would put them at a competitive disadvantage if competitive companies were allowed to file FOIs on everything that company were to do. The shareholder would also be impacted, because that information would be privileged information that all other companies could keep to themselves, but only this one wouldn't be allowed to.

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Mr McGuinty: Minister, this is a public company. Hydro One is competing with nobody today. What are you afraid of? What are you trying to hide? Why can't hydro ratepayers find out what the company is paying by way of salaries and compensation packages, especially to people at the senior executive levels?

I'll tell you why they are very concerned. In 1999, when you created a wall of secrecy around these companies, we knew that the Tories were at the trough. We knew that Tom Long, Leslie Noble and Paul Rhodes all had ridiculously fat contracts. We knew that and I'm sure you're aware of that, Minister, because the media dug up the information under then-existing FOI legislation, which covered Hydro.

The fact is that you are covering something up. You can dissuade us of this by simply agreeing to do two things which I think serve the public interest: let's have a forensic audit to find out what people are getting paid, and let's turn the lights on the—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think Hydro One and OPG should be allowed the same privileges as any private sector company operating within that operation. The people at OPG are also operating in the private sector. As generators, they would also be in a situation where companies would be allowed to file FOIs and determine very important and private information about the company.

It seems to me that if the argument is made, then you'd also make the argument with respect to Enbridge and Toronto Hydro. All those companies would be in exactly the same situation. The same argument could be

made with respect to Toronto Hydro. No doubt about it: it's the same jurisdiction and the same public accountability.

The argument isn't a question of covering up. They file on the Ontario Securities Commission the same information that private sector companies do. They provide that information; it's out there for the public to see. Anything more would be very difficult for a private sector company to operate under if they were the only ones forced to operate under that particular jurisdiction.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Before your government introduced your Hydro privatization bill, your Premier promised full public hearings on the bill. Now we learn that your definition of full public hearings means just two days outside Toronto: one day in Ottawa and one day in London. You seem to think that people outside Toronto don't matter when it comes to this issue.

Deputy Premier, this is the people's hydroelectric system, not yours, not Eleanor Clitheroe's. Why are you so opposed to having the people of Ontario have a say in what happens to their hydroelectric system?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): We offered public hearings. We asked for input from the opposition parties about public hearings. The response was practically negligible. We requested that information get back to us, on the proviso that we would like to get this bill passed by June 27. I said I'd be happy to discuss any agreement between three parties with respect to getting the bill passed by June 27. Your House leader put in an application that wouldn't allow us to pass it by June 27, so obviously there was something counterproductive about that when we had suggested we'd like it passed by June 27. I asked them, "Give me your best estimates. Where do you want to travel to?" etc. All I got back was the Liberals saying, "Scrap the bill," and you saying, "Go to 12 cities," which we couldn't get in by June 27. I had to act unilaterally because you people were acting absolutely irresponsibly.

Mr Hampton: It would appear we've settled one thing. The emphasis for the government isn't upon hearing from the people of the province; it's on ramming this through as quickly as they can and shutting out as many people as they can.

I also want to ask you about northern Ontario. The pulp and paper industry, the mining industry and the steel industry are all heavily dependent upon electricity, but you're not going to go to anywhere in northern Ontario. You're not going to go to a mining community, a pulp and paper community or a steel manufacturing community, as if they don't matter, as if their need to have access to electricity is somehow irrelevant to your government.

Can you tell all those people, the hundreds of thousands of jobs that are dependent on receiving electricity in a reliable and predictable fashion at affordable prices, why you don't even think they're important?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I do think they're important. The fact remains, why did you not submit a reasonable recommendation rather than the notoriously—you guys offer up absolutely impossible recommendations to the House leader to fulfill. You absolutely put impossible restrictions on us in order to suggest that we didn't co-operate.

Well, we did co-operate. I asked your House leader, "Where do you want to travel? Let's work this out. Let's get some detailed plans together. Let's work in co-operation, so we can get this bill to as many communities as possible."

What did he give me back? Nothing. Some bogus report suggesting he doesn't want it passed by June 27, so he put on as many cities as he could. That's not negotiation; that's the dog-in-the-manger attitude that you people take on everything. Then you stand up here and claim we're not negotiating.

You don't negotiate. You don't agree to anything. All you want to do is put another notch in your belt that we passed time allocation. You people think the only thing we should be doing in here is argue about nothing when we could be travelling, going to towns, going to committees, but you put irresponsible applications in to the House leader.

Mr Hampton: I guess we are to tell the people of Ontario now that, according to the government, we should negotiate away a community like Thunder Bay, with four pulp and paper mills, or we should negotiate away a community like Sudbury, with mining operations, or negotiate away Hamilton, with steel mills, or negotiate away Windsor, with all the auto assembly plants and manufacturing plants.

Get it through your head, Minister: this is not your hydro system; this system belongs to the people of Ontario who built it over generations. If you think you can simply swing a deal in a backroom with a couple of your honchos on Bay Street and line their pockets, and people are going to let it happen, you're quite wrong.

Seventy per cent of the people out there are opposed to this. Are you going to provide across-the-province public hearings, or are you simply going to listen to your cronies on Bay Street?

Hon Mr Stockwell: You've got a team to pick, then, when it comes to Bill 80. Why don't you pass the bill? Whose side are you on? Are you on the ratepayers' side? Then pass the bill by unanimous consent so we can move forward to get those salaries down.

Furthermore, you've got a lot of nerve to talk about public hearings. You were part of a government that pushed through the social contract. How many public hearings did you have on that? How many towns did you go to on that one? How many minutes did you have for public consultation? How much time did you have for amendments? How much longer did you go on clause-

to ask for your help. They want to know whether or not you're going to help them. These are good schools where good learning is taking place. Your funding formula is closing small schools in particular, where studies are telling us very good learning is taking place.

There's a school in Bruce township called Bruce Township Central School that is slated for closure. It's the only school between Kincardine and Port Elgin. When it goes, kids are going to be bused to Kincardine or Port Elgin.

The parents here are from Sarnia, Toronto, Essex and Port Colborne. Again, on their behalf, I say to you, why not put in place a moratorium until you have reviewed and repaired your funding formula?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think it's very important to recognize and understand that school closings are always difficult issues. It is always very challenging. Our government has recognized that we do have schools that have declining enrolment and small populations. We have actually made more money available this year to those schools.

In fact, you mentioned that some of the parents here today are from Port Colborne. For the record, I just want to indicate that Tim Hudak, the MPP, has already made the previous minister aware of the fact that the parents are concerned with the funding formula and have the view that the board did not follow a fair process.

As I have said to you again, it is up to each board to determine how they deal with the building of new schools and the closings of others.

I would just like to quote you, Mr McGuinty. In November 1998, you said, "Well, you know, um, schools close and schools open on a fairly regular basis." You're right. School trustees have continued—it's a tough—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time is up.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): To the Minister of Energy: Deb Hutton was one of Mike Harris's and Ernie Eves's most trusted political advisors. In fact, she was at Ernie Eves's side when he won your party's leadership, and she was a senior member of his transition team.

Ms Hutton now also happens to be a vice-president at Hydro One. I'm sure you're familiar with that. How much money are Ontario ratepayers paying Deb Hutton?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I don't have any idea.

Mr McGuinty: The problem, Minister, is that you don't care, and you should. You should have that information. More importantly, so should Hydro's ratepayers, the people of Ontario. We can't get this information because of the blackout that your government imposed on Ontario Hydro's successor companies.

Today I'm asking for your support on two things: (1) a forensic audit to find out what Deb Hutton and others at

Hydro One are now making; and (2) I'm asking that we make Hydro One and all of Hydro's successor companies subject to freedom-of-information laws.

Will you support those two measures? Will you turn the lights on at Hydro?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The rationale behind the exclusion of this particular company from freedom-of-information laws is the same rationale used for the exclusion of Toronto Hydro—another good example of a company that is excluded from the FOIs. The fact of the matter is, if they're operating within the private sector, which they are, then it would be very simple for a competitor to file an FOI and find out exactly anything they want about the company.

Mr McGuinty: No, not "anything."

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, absolutely. Once you file under the FOI, you can file for virtually anything under that company's jurisdiction. Therefore, I think even you would concede that it would put them at a competitive disadvantage if competitive companies were allowed to file FOIs on everything that company were to do. The shareholder would also be impacted, because that information would be privileged information that all other companies could keep to themselves, but only this one wouldn't be allowed to.

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Mr McGuinty: Minister, this is a public company. Hydro One is competing with nobody today. What are you afraid of? What are you trying to hide? Why can't hydro ratepayers find out what the company is paying by way of salaries and compensation packages, especially to people at the senior executive levels?

I'll tell you why they are very concerned. In 1999, when you created a wall of secrecy around these companies, we knew that the Tories were at the trough. We knew that Tom Long, Leslie Noble and Paul Rhodes all had ridiculously fat contracts. We knew that and I'm sure you're aware of that, Minister, because the media dug up the information under then-existing FOI legislation, which covered Hydro.

The fact is that you are covering something up. You can dissuade us of this by simply agreeing to do two things which I think serve the public interest: let's have a forensic audit to find out what people are getting paid, and let's turn the lights on the—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think Hydro One and OPG should be allowed the same privileges as any private sector company operating within that operation. The people at OPG are also operating in the private sector. As generators, they would also be in a situation where companies would be allowed to file FOIs and determine very important and private information about the company.

It seems to me that if the argument is made, then you'd also make the argument with respect to Enbridge and Toronto Hydro. All those companies would be in exactly the same situation. The same argument could be

made with respect to Toronto Hydro. No doubt about it: it's the same jurisdiction and the same public accountability.

The argument isn't a question of covering up. They file on the Ontario Securities Commission the same information that private sector companies do. They provide that information; it's out there for the public to see. Anything more would be very difficult for a private sector company to operate under if they were the only ones forced to operate under that particular jurisdiction.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Before your government introduced your Hydro privatization bill, your Premier promised full public hearings on the bill. Now we learn that your definition of full public hearings means just two days outside Toronto: one day in Ottawa and one day in London. You seem to think that people outside Toronto don't matter when it comes to this issue.

Deputy Premier, this is the people's hydroelectric system, not yours, not Eleanor Clitheroe's. Why are you so opposed to having the people of Ontario have a say in what happens to their hydroelectric system?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

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by-clause? Absolutely zero. Zip. And you're talking to us.

We're having a week. We're travelling. We're going to cities. We've got clause-by-clause. If we have 15 seconds of public hearings, that's 15 seconds longer than you had on the social contract, I'll tell you.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Hampton: To the Minister of Energy—the Minister of Energy, and the Premier, who said you were going to hold province-wide public hearings on this very important issue—I'm simply calling you on what your government said. Once again we find that what you said a month ago is suddenly very shallow.

But I also want to ask you why your government considers it so important to keep the consumers of the province in the dark. Part of what you've introduced in this legislation would essentially keep the consumers of this province from knowing what generating stations are in effect gaming the market, manipulating the market, forcing prices up. You seem to have the attitude that the less consumers know, the better for them it is.

Will you take out the pieces of this legislation that in effect place a cloak of secrecy on what's happening in terms of power production and the independent market operator in this province?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm not really sure he's driving at a point here. He says we're trying to keep the consumers in the dark. I think this bill does exactly the opposite. It provides an opportunity for consumers to have full knowledge of the kind of agreements they're entering into. It talks about a 30-day cooling-off period. It talks about a 15-day period after which you have to sign on to ensure it's a double standard to be met. It talks about no negative optioning. It talks about giving the OEB more power to investigate complaints. It talks about the IMO being allowed to go on-site in investigating companies with respect to their generation power. I think this is protecting the consumers considerably across Ontario.

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I don't know what you're talking about. What it comes down to is the same thing as you talk about with respect to House leaders and travel. We'd be very happy to travel. We'd be very happy to have committees go out. We'd be very happy to negotiate an agreement to send the committee out. Can you just direct your House leader from hell to go out and negotiate a contract that we could have?

Mr Hampton: I will take the minister up, because we submitted to you the list of communities where we wanted committee hearings held. Your response was a time allocation bill which effectively ruled out those communities. So we'll put those communities forward again today and we'll expect from you later on today a commitment that the committee will go to those communities and hear from people in those communities.

Let me get back on the point I was just trying to make, that your legislation as proposed would, in effect, allow the independent market operator to keep secret from people all kinds of information about what is happening

in terms of the generation of electricity and the marketing of electricity. I simply say to you again, if you think your scheme for privatization of electricity is so wonderful, why are you trying to keep the freedom-of-information act from shining the light on what's happening? What do you have to hide that you want to keep consumers out of the information?

Hon Mr Stockwell: It relates back to the original question by the leader of the official opposition. There is certain information that, if you allow filing to the FOI for private sector operators, would put them at a competitive disadvantage to others in the industry. It's fairly clear that everybody understands that. That's why they have to compete in private sector operations, and if they have to meet certain requirements that are much more stringent and much more specific than other private sector operators, then it becomes an unfair disadvantage for them and a clear advantage for the other competitors. I think I was very clear on that.

With respect to your committee, I just got a list of 12 cities from your House leader, but nowhere does he say how he's going to manage this through the committee process in order to get the bill back to the House by June 27. I've been very clear with him. I've said June 27 is when we want to pass this bill. All I get is a list of cities that he goes through around Ontario. There's got to be 50, 100, a thousand cities he's left off the list. What have you got against all those other cities, I say to the leader of the third party? Why are you opposed to those good cities—Etobicoke, for instance? What have you got against the good people of Etobicoke, I say to the leader of the third party?

TAXATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Finance. I have been travelling the province, as I'm sure you have been as well, and when I speak with families, they talk to me about some of the concerns they have. I ask this in participation of next week's budget. They talk to me about the shortage of doctors in their communities, the shortage of nurses, maybe hospital beds, cutbacks on CCAC home care hours. They talk to me about school closures, class sizes. Maybe their kids are on a waiting list for their first psychological assessment. There are some 39,000 children there.

In light of those pressing needs and concerns on the part of our families, Madam Minister, I am asking you with respect to next week's budget, will you now not reconsider your government's drive to reduce corporate taxes to the point where they are 25% below their US counterparts?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): This government is very well aware of the concerns of Ontario's families, the priorities that families in Ontario put on good health care, on a good education system, on a good, clean environment. We're well aware of that. But families also recognize that you can't spend money you don't

have, that we need to have jobs and economic growth here in this province if we're going to have the resources to spend on quality-of-life programs like health and education.

I know the honourable member across the way thinks that business and jobs just naturally appear in this province. That was the attitude from the Liberals and the NDP that drove jobs out of this province. Our job is to make sure we have the investment here and the jobs here so our families can be strong, so we can have the growth and the prosperity that allow us to make the new investments in health and the new investments in education that we have continued to make and will continue to make.

Mr McGuinty: Well, you are obviously and painfully out of touch with the needs and concerns of Ontario families.

You know who I'm with on this one. I'm with Liz Witmer. This is what she said during the course of the leadership race. She said, "I don't hear people asking me for tax cuts when I travel the province." She's absolutely right. They are not after you to cut corporate taxes; they are after you to do more for their health care, their education, the protection of the environment and so on. And besides that, Madam Minister, they are wondering why it is that you consider it absolutely essential that our corporate taxes be at a level that is 25% below that of their American counterparts. It's one thing to have corporate taxes that are competitive, but they are in fact today competitive. Why is it that you insist—where is this obsession coming from that would drive our corporate taxes 25% below their US counterparts at the expense of investment in health care, education and the environment?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I know the honourable member likes to ignore the literally hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents who make modest incomes who no longer have to pay Ontario income tax. They have to pay federal income tax. I haven't heard him complain about how his federal colleagues are in the pockets of people in the low-income level. He never complains about that.

But let's also be very clear. He keeps talking about this mythical \$2-billion tax cut for corporations. The only way he's going to cancel any \$2-billion corporation tax or tax for business means he's going to have to raise taxes in this economy \$2 billion. He's talking about the policy that the Liberal Party is going to raise business taxes in this province \$2 billion. If you're concerned about Ontario families, wait and see how many of them are still employed if you take \$2 billion out of our business community.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Thousands of young people across the province, including my great riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, are about to leave school and start summer jobs. I know you have a great concern for the health and safety of young

people. Can you tell us what is being done to reach young people with the message to work safely?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I thank the honourable member for the question. Our government on this side of the House has made a very strong commitment to the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses in all sectors, making Ontario's workplaces among the safest in the world. At the present time, in the last five years, we've actually reduced workplace injuries by over 30%, which is a significant outcome.

We're now reaching out to young people over the course of the summer. Our concern is that as they are enthusiastic about getting into their jobs and earning wages, we want to make sure they are aware of the dangers where they are working. That's why the WSIB has put forth a young worker awareness campaign and will spend \$675,000 this summer. It will run all the way to Labour Day. We want to make sure the kids who are going out working, the young workers, know their rights, their responsibilities and how to protect themselves in the workplace. That's essential to prevention of injuries.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. As we recognize the work that the WSIB, which is the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and the Ministry of Labour are doing to achieve safe workplaces, I would like to know if there are other things that other people can do as well.

Hon Mr Clark: It's a very good question. What we have to do is to change an entire workplace culture. We have to change an attitude. If you go back in time and you remember drinking and driving 20, 30 or 40 years ago, it wasn't a huge issue. People thought they could handle their alcohol and drive an automobile. We found that that was wrong. We've changed an entire culture, an entire attitude in the province about drinking and driving.

Now we have to do the same thing when it comes to workplace injuries and illness. Now we have to provide a combination of enforcement, awareness and education. We need parents to be involved. We need kids to be involved. We need the employers to be involved, the unions, their leaders, everyone to be involved to ensure that the workplaces for our young people are safe. We don't want any injuries. We want to prevent the injuries themselves. That means we need an entire shift in culture and attitude. We need friends, co-workers and everyone to become more aware and create an environment where we're all working for one goal, and that is the prevention of illnesses.

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POLLUTION CONTROL

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Deputy Premier. On Friday there was a headline in the Standard that said, "Tories Determined to Sell Hydro One," and a very animated-looking Minister of Environment speaking. It's interesting to hear what he says to editorial boards and what he says in this House. I

want to see whether you agree with him, speaking on behalf of the Premier.

The Premier of this province said that he was in favour, or gave the suggestion he was in favour, of the signing of the Kyoto accord. Yet when speaking to the St Catharines Standard, this is what the Minister of Environment is reported to have said: "Until the United States agrees to sign the Kyoto accord, Ontario will oppose any potential ratification of the climate change treaty in Canada."

I would like to ask you, do you agree with the Premier who suggested somehow that he was in favour of signing the Kyoto accord or do you agree with the Minister of Environment, who says you won't possibly sign it until George Bush and the United States agree to it?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): It's a tough one. I'm going to give it to the Minister of Environment.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I was going to give it to the Minister of Energy.

I think you should talk to your federal cousins with respect to the Kyoto accord. If there's any foot-dragging with respect to the Kyoto accord it's coming—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think you should talk to your federal cousins. It seems to me that there's a huge rift between Mr Dhaliwal and Mr Anderson with respect to the accord. All along, our position on the accord is, we have got to see some hard numbers put in place that the federal government is very resistant to lay on the table. Until we see those numbers, no one can have any knowledge as to whether or not they're going to support the accord or not support the accord.

The idea is noble but we have to see how they're going to implement it to ensure that we can protect the things we—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

Mr Bradley: I draw from that the conclusion that the minister disagrees with the Premier and in fact the government is going to drag its feet on this and not play a leadership role.

I'd like to go back to the Deputy Premier again, because once again you'll recall I asked a question last week in the House about the conversion of coal-fired generating plants in Ontario to gas-fired plants. This was the answer I got from the Minister of the Environment: "If we listen to the thinking of the critic for the environment, the only way he wants to get up to number one" in North America "is that we close down all our infrastructure, close down all our plants, close down all our manufacturing and lay everybody off and put them on welfare. Then we'll be number one. That's the logic the critic has: close everything down, don't create any jobs, no prosperity, put everybody on welfare and we'll be number one."

I ask the Deputy Premier, because I don't think when she was Minister of Environment she would have given

that answer, does she agree with the Minister of Environment when he says that if you convert the coal-fired plants, somehow Ontario will come to a standstill? Does she agree with that? I know my friend Mr Gilchrist does not.

Hon Mr Stockwell: There's revisionism again from the Liberals. The problem is, the answer you're asking for was from a different question you asked. The question you—

Mr Bradley: Just answer the question.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Hold it. You know what? I understand it's my job now to make you look bad, and I'll tell you, afterwards I'm going to feel terrible about it.

The question he asked me last week was with respect to a study that was put out in 1999. I responded by suggesting to the member opposite that the only way we're going to get up to the high echelon where he wanted to be with Guam and Hawaii and PEI is that we'd have to shut down all the manufacturing, all the job opportunities, all the investment and all the prosperity. Everyone would end up on welfare, and that's the goal of the NDP and the Liberals. That doesn't happen to be our goal.

With respect to coal-fired plants, you could have shut down the coal-fired plants when you were that wonderful Minister of Environment your leader talked about. Why didn't you shut down the coal-fired plants? I know why you didn't. You didn't because if you did, people would be left in the dark. There would be no hydro for our seniors, single mothers and all those important people out there. So when your Ministry of the Environment was so important, how come—

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time is up.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Al McDonald (Nipissing): My question is for the Minister of Finance. It has been reported that the budget will be delivered on June 17, 2002. In fact, newspapers are already speculating about what its contents may be. I'm wondering, Minister, if you can give us some idea where this budget is headed.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I'd like to thank the member for Nipissing for the question. Yes, we announced we will be tabling the budget on June 17, 2002. I think it's important to recognize, as I've said in this House, that we are being presented with significant challenges this year because of the economic slowdown, even though there are signs of increased growth in many sectors of the province because of the steps this government has taken over the last several years. We are seeing declines in some significant revenue streams; for example, business profits. I know the leader of the opposition stands for a \$2-billion tax increase on our business community, but we would certainly see the loss in jobs if that kind of policy were to go through.

We will be tabling a budget next week that responds to the priorities of Ontario families, that responds to their concerns around health, around the environment, around education, but also responds to their concerns for good,

strong, economic fundamentals to keep the jobs growing in this province.

Mr McDonald: Minister, there have been some concerns about the nature of our budgets, specifically requests that we move to a more businesslike approach. I believe these are legitimate concerns. I wonder if the minister can tell the House if there is any effort to address these concerns.

Hon Mrs Ecker: It's not something that necessarily attracts a lot of public attention, but this government has been following through on its commitment to make sure that the way we keep our books and the way we report on the finances of the province are very accountable to taxpayers, and also that they represent the best advice that we have received from organizations like the Ontario Financial Review Commission, the Public Sector Accounting Board with the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, and the Provincial Auditor. One of the changes we will be making in this budget is how we report the tangible capital assets to respond to those particular recommendations. I know the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has also periodically raised this from across the House, as well as my colleague the member for Mississauga Centre.

We certainly will be following through on this. I've written to the Provincial Auditor to let him know that we'll be approving the province's reporting on tangible capital assets for better management of our taxpayers' resources.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Health. On May 27, 2002, the Ontario Hospital Association sent an update to members advising that it was holding intense discussions with the Ministry of Health on the urgent need for a funding announcement. The OHA said, "The current hospital funding problems stem directly from the planned under-spending in the 2001 provincial budget. At that time, the government was advised of the real needs of hospitals to maintain current programs and those needs were not included in the budget." Ontario hospitals need at least \$300 million to deal with problems from last year and another \$600 million to \$700 million just to maintain current services.

Minister, can you tell us today if the real needs of Ontario hospitals will be met in the budget?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): No, I can't tell you that today, because I am neither the Minister of Finance nor in charge of the budget. I can tell you that in the past two years this government has increased funding by 22% for our hospital sector and, in the 2001-02 fiscal year, spending on behalf of the people of Ontario for hospitals reached a record \$8.8 billion.

Ms Martel: If I might, the financial needs of Ontario hospitals are very serious. The OHA estimates that 100 out of 160 hospitals are now operating in the red. The University Health Network has dipped into its cash

reserves to keep operating. The Rouge Valley Health System is now into its line of credit and has had to meet with the bankers to continue operating.

Despite your comments about multi-year funding for hospitals, the throne speech also says that as Ontario moves toward its goal of multi-year base funding, it needs the federal government's partnership in health care.

Minister, the question is very clear: are you going to meet the real needs of Ontario hospitals in this budget, and are you going to move to multi-year funding even if you don't get additional funding from the federal government?

1530

Hon Mr Clement: The commitment of this government has been clear. Indeed, through the first throne speech of the Ernie Eves government, this government committed itself to moving rapidly, I would say, to a multi-year funding model. This has been accepted with enthusiasm by the Ontario Hospital Association, speaking on behalf of Ontario's hospitals. They saw it as a very significant announcement in the throne speech and something that shows we are listening. We understand the need for multi-year budgeting that our hospitals have to engage in, and indeed this is a priority for this government.

The honourable member is quite correct: it is difficult to fund and finance our hospitals when the federal Liberal government has allocated merely 14 cents of every health care dollar spent from their budget. That has been an issue in the past, and it will continue to be an issue.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): This is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last year you asked the Toronto District Health Council to evaluate a proposal to replace the existing Humber River Regional Hospital with a new superhospital. The council reported back to you that this was a bad idea. In fact, it said it was not in the community's interest and that it would hurt the most vulnerable in the community.

You can imagine our surprise when Rueben Devlin, president and CEO of Humber River Regional Hospital, announced you were supporting his proposal for a new superhospital. In case you've forgotten, Rueben Devlin is also president of the Ontario PC Party.

My question is: does being president of the PC Party of Ontario entitle you to privileged information, and does being president of the PC Party of Ontario entitle you to get what you want even if it's not in the community's best interests?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): You must be very happy that your seatmate was not present when you make that allegation. As president of the Ontario Liberal Party—some people were asking the same kinds of questions.

The honourable member is incorrect. There has been no decision made by this government with respect to the

Humber River Regional Hospital. Any decision that is made by this government will be made on the basis that we have better health care for people in northwestern and western Toronto in the catchment area of the Humber River Regional Hospital. That is the way these decisions are made, and that's the way they should be made.

Mr Cordiano: Minister, I have correspondence from you that clearly says no decision has been reached and that this matter is still under review. Dr Devlin claims he has correspondence from you that says he's instructed to proceed with his plans. In fact, he claims you support his proposal and that your support is continuing.

I say again that his claims amount to his having received insider information about a cabinet decision. If we believe Dr Devlin, then obviously his position as party president has entitled him to privileged information, and that amounts to a conflict of interest. Who are we to believe: the president of the PC Party of Ontario or you, Minister? Which one is it?

Hon Mr Clement: It really is beneath this honourable member to make these baseless allegations. The difference in your allegation is this: I said to the president of the hospital that he could proceed with presenting a proposal. He can proceed with creating a proposal. That did not mean, and does not mean, that we have automatically accepted any proposal. That is the difference between your allegation and any form of insider information you're alleging, which is simply not true and simply not a policy of this government.

I would go back to my original statement: we will make a decision, just as we make any decision, on the basis of what we see as furthering the health care needs, in this case, of citizens of Ontario who find themselves in the catchment area of the particular hospital.

If the honourable member has an allegation to make, with actual evidence, make the allegation. What you have right now is beneath you as an honourable member, and you should withdraw it at this particular time.

TELEMARKETING PRACTICES

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. Minister, not a year goes by that we don't hear about telemarketing scams taking advantage of vulnerable members of our society. It's of particular concern to many seniors in my riding of Scarborough Centre.

I was pleased to hear Minister DeFaria speak about fraud-proofing of seniors last week, because knowledge, as we know, is a very important weapon against this sort of crime. But I'm sure, Minister, you will agree that just as important as fraud-proofing is fraud prevention. We have to continue our commitment to pulling the line on telephone scams. What are you doing to prevent this kind of despicable crime in our province?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I thank the member for Scarborough Centre for the question and for her work on protecting seniors from scams in her riding.

In fact, the Ernie Eves government, together with the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, is doing its best to take the steam out of these boiler room operations. These are aggressive, intensive and fully mobile underground telemarketing scam operations that chiefly target seniors and other vulnerable people. I'm very pleased to let the members of the House know that today at Metro Toronto police headquarters we announced a major boiler room bust through a strategic partnership with the province, the OPP anti-rackets squad, the York and Toronto police forces and US law enforcement. Through this hard work, people are now behind bars, guns were taken off the street, and thousands of dollars were returned to innocent victims.

On behalf of Premier Eves and also the Minister of Public Safety and Security, Bob Runciman, I want to recognize our partners in this initiative: Staff Inspector Mike Federico from the Toronto police fraud squad; Staff Sergeant Kevin O'Grady from the York squad; Detective Sergeant Barry Colquhoun from the OPP anti-rackets squad; and Deirdre Brennan from the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. Great work.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you for that response, Minister, and please allow me to extend my personal appreciation to the police officers and the ministry's investigators who are here today. They are indeed doing an excellent job in keeping our streets and our phone lines safe.

Not all citizens will know what boiler rooms and advance-fee loan scams are, and this is a real barrier to actually preventing these crimes. With the mobile nature of these fraud operations, it's very important that we keep Ontarians up to date on what to look for and how to react to these scams. It's also important that we let people know about some of the resources we have when it comes to fighting telephone fraud.

Minister, how can someone recognize one of these scams, and what should they do if they believe they have been contacted or even victimized by a telephone scam?

Hon Mr Hudak: The member for Scarborough Centre is right. These types of boiler room operators have scams that are advance-fee scams. They'll offer, for a fee, special services like credit card protection, prizes on their way, or loans at very beneficial rates. Whatever they colour it as, it's fraud and it's criminal.

Unfortunately, not all citizens who are contacted take the chance to let us know at the ministry. I want to let those at home know that if they know somebody who has been a victim of this or has received a suspicious phone call, they can call us at the Consumer Services Bureau at 1-800-889-9768 or through Phone Busters at 1-888-495-8501.

The goal of the Ernie Eves government is to bust these boiler rooms. We work with partners in Canada, Ontario and the US. We want to put the criminals in jail and shut down these boiler rooms. Since February 2000, this partnership has resulted in 40 boiler rooms being shut down and close to \$1.2 million being seized and returned.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

In 1995, Mike Harris promised that no community should be forced to take the garbage of other communities against its will. Canadian Waste Services has proposed to expand the Richmond landfill site that is located in the town of Greater Napanee in my riding, and the environmental assessment for this proposal is now underway. The town of Greater Napanee is on record as an unwilling host. People within the community do not want a bigger dump in their midst, and they are frustrated that the environmental assessment process does not provide a component that will consider alternatives to burying our garbage. They want to be part of a process that actively and aggressively pursues more progressive and environmentally sound ways of disposing of municipal solid waste.

I'm asking, Minister, will you act today to direct Canadian Waste Services to revise the terms of reference for the Richmond landfill expansion to include a section outlining alternatives to landfilling?

1540

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I know as Minister of the Environment you're put in a very, very awkward position when situations come up with respect to environmental assessments. Not but a couple of weeks ago, your friend from Timiskaming basically told me that I had got involved in an environmental assessment hearing that hadn't been filed yet. Get that? It hadn't even been filed yet, and he suggested I remove myself from that situation because I had commented on a potential environmental assessment. Here we are today, not but two short weeks later, and a member of the opposition is saying now, "Insert yourself into the environmental assessment program and do something I want you to do."

You can see that it's kind of a Catch-22: on one hand, one member from your caucus is saying, "Don't get involved in the environmental assessment hearing. If you do, then you're in conflict and you should step down," and you're saying to me today, "Get involved in the environmental assessment hearing, and if you don't, you're not doing your job and you should step down." I'm kind of between a rock and the devil and the deep blue sea.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Minister, I am asking you to make the process what the people in the community want, which is what the terms of reference are designed to do.

In March of this year, Ernie Eves was in Napanee. When he was there, he was presented with this issue. This is what the Premier stated in the Napanee Beaver: "We should be developing processes right here in the province of Ontario that are scientific and environmental at the same time. Other jurisdictions have done it and some jurisdictions in Ontario have done it, so I don't see

any reason why we can't be promoting this kind of activity as opposed to just continuing to extend and expand large megadumps in the province. That's not the answer to our problem." That is what the Premier said in March. Clearly, the Premier has stated that alternatives should be considered, and yet this environmental assessment precludes that.

I'm asking you today, Minister, will you correct this error in the environmental assessment, this oversight, and will you commit today to direct that the environmental assessment will include a component to consider alternatives to landfill?

Hon Mr Stockwell: You know what? Allow me to answer in a broader way with respect to alternatives.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Why don't you answer the specifics?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm sorry. I thought that was Sandra.

What I want to do in a more broad approach to this—I agree with that approach. I think we should be looking at alternatives. The mistake was made many years ago when I think the NDP pulled incineration right off the table. I don't think it's such a bad idea to look at incineration or other forms of landfill issues. I think in a broader review we can put forward some initiatives in the future that would allow us to do that. I don't disagree with you. But the problem I'm faced with now is that this is actually an environmental assessment that is an ongoing concern. As Minister of the Environment, it would be very inappropriate of me to meddle in the process now that it's been set up.

Having said that, there's nothing to say, after the fact, that when submitted the EA will be subject to a thorough technical review by extension of a government review team and they have an approved terms of reference and are preparing the EA in accordance with the approved terms of reference. Finally, the public may request that the EA be referred to a hearing after the review of the EA has been published.

You haven't closed all the doors. There is opportunity in the future.

With respect to the original question, I'm in agreement and I think we should be moving toward that.

HIGHWAY 7

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. I've been meeting with and listening to constituents of Durham on important issues in my riding. For instance, the Scugog Chamber of Commerce has brought to my attention the need for improvements at the intersection of Highway 7A and Island Road on Scugog Island. There are also ongoing concerns expressed by Mayor Doug Moffatt and members of Scugog council on the same issue.

By way of background, the road is heavily travelled since it leads directly to the Great Blue Heron Charity Casino. I might say that on Scugog Island this is the only way in and the only way out. It is important to under-

stand that the engineering and design work on the project is complete. However, to the best of my knowledge there has not been any commitment to proceed.

An important temporary solution was the addition of a stoplight at the intersection, for immediate assistance. Minister, can you please advise me, on behalf of my constituents in the township of Scugog, what progress will be made toward highway improvements at this very busy intersection over the next few months?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): I'm beginning to wonder if there are any provincial highways in any other ridings than Durham East. However, this member does represent his constituents very well. I want to tell him that we are committed, as you know, to safe roads in our province, and particularly with regard to these kinds of improvements that can be made.

With respect to Highway 7 and the Island Road, we have reviewed that situation and we have determined that traffic signals are indeed needed because of the heavy volumes there. We evaluated temporary lights in this area, but we found that they could not be installed in a safe manner because of the design of the particular intersection. So what we're doing at the present time is designing four permanent ones. After we acquire the property we will then go ahead and put the traffic lights in.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that comprehensive response, Minister. I know it's an ongoing issue and I know you'll be working hard at it, and I'll be working hard on you.

Another intersection, Highway 7A in Scugog township, is the intersection of Old Simcoe Road and 7A where the community and the township council have requested a traffic light, as well. Minister, could you advise on the status of this request for a signal at this location?

Hon Mr Sterling: This is another very important intersection along Highway 7A, and like the island project, we have already made significant progress in moving this project forward. We have determined that, again, there is a need for traffic signals at this intersection. Once we have acquired the property surrounding this particular intersection, we will be able to go ahead with these safety improvements and install the traffic light that is so badly needed. I congratulate the mayor of the township council in terms of bringing this forward and working with the member for Durham East on this important issue.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): A question for the Minister of Public Safety: Minister, you are responsible for judges sending criminals back out on to the street instead of to jail. Metro West Detention Centre—three inmates per cell instead of the one inmate per cell it was designed for. That means inmates are taking shifts sleeping on the floor. You've reduced the number of staff, so that rather than two correctional officers per unit

there's only one, and that means that because he or she doesn't have the backup of a second correctional officer, they have to position themselves away from direct contact with inmates. Over 50 inmates diagnosed with tuberculosis; over 100 inmates yet to be tested still in the range, still out there among the general population. Judges have been refusing to send criminals to your jails because of what they call the inhumane conditions, the dangerous conditions, the unsafe conditions. When are you going to do something about it as part of your law-and-order agenda?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): We are doing something about it. We're the first government in memory to do something about it. Through infrastructure renewal, this government is investing millions of dollars in new facilities. We have one in Penetanguishene, one soon to open in Lindsay and there are other investments being made across the province, so clearly we do recognize the gravity of the situation. We can't build new institutions overnight but we are moving quite quickly and quite expeditiously.

I would mention, with reference to the particular case the member raises, that we were going through a very challenging time—the strike situation, where we were operating our facilities primarily with management people from across government, who did an outstanding job under very difficult circumstances.

Mr Kormos: Minister, bullfeathers. One, this isn't the first time this happened. Last summer another judge made the same observation about Metro West and similarly refused to send a convicted prisoner there. The truth is that with all your so-called plans for expansion, there's not one single new correctional bed, because for every new bed in the system you're closing another. You've done nothing to alleviate this situation. You de-staffed Metro West; you made the decision to reduce correction officers in units from two to one. You've made the decision to de-staff so that they can't do adequate testing, as is required, upon admissions. You are exposing, not just other inmates, but—think about it, Minister of Public Safety—correctional officers to the risk of riot, mayhem, and the risk of disease, not only for themselves but their families and children.

This needs your prompt response now. You can do something about it. Why don't you get resources back into Metro West, get correctional officers back in there, live up to your claim to fame as Mr Law and Order?

1550

Hon Mr Runciman: The member is right about one thing: this is not a new problem. In fact, it was referenced in the 1993 auditor's report. I'm not sure what party was in government at that time—I think it was the NDP—but they talked about capital investment in the infrastructure, the problems of overcrowding. The Conservative government is the first government to make a commitment to do something about this situation, and we are doing it.

I would also take the opportunity to ask the member opposite and his party to go on the record with respect to a number of things that this party has asked the federal

government to look at with respect to overcrowding in the provincial system—intermittent sentences, for one thing, which create significant problems for us in terms of setting beds aside, staff requirements etc; bringing drugs into the system on the weekends. This is a real problem which I do not think the NDP has taken a position on and certainly the Liberal Party has not taken a position to encourage their federal cousins in Ottawa to remove intermittent sentencing from the federal rules.

PETITIONS

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the legislative Assembly of Ontario.

It's entitled "Listen: Our Hearing is Important!"

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas the new Harris government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas this new Harris government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underfunded and underserviced areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

I affix my signature and ask Jordan, our new page, to bring it to the table.

CHILD CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that's been sent to me by Child Care Algoma in Sault Ste Marie. It reads as follows:

"Petition to the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas an internal government document states the Conservative government is considering cutting the regulated child care budget by at least 40%;

"Whereas the same internal document states the government is also considering completely cutting all funding for regulated child care and family resource programs;

"Whereas the Conservative government has already cut funding for regulated child care by 15% between 1995 and 1998 and downloaded 20% of the child care and family resource program budget on to municipalities;

"Whereas Fraser Mustard and Margaret McCain identified regulated child care and family resource programs as integral to early childhood development;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million from the federal government over five years for early childhood development;

"Whereas Ontario is the only province which didn't spend a cent of this year's federal money on regulated child care;

"Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resources continues to grow in Ontario,

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Conservative government protect the current regulated child care and family resource program budgets and invest significant federal Early Years funding in regulated child care and family resource programs. We demand future federal Early Years funding be invested in an expansion of affordable, regulated child care and in continued funding for family resource programs."

I agree with the petitioners; I have affixed my signature to this.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): This petition with some 500 signatures on it, approximately, is being presented on behalf of the member for Kitchener-Waterloo and Deputy Premier and Minister of Education, who, as you know, is unable to present petitions in this House because of the rules of the standing orders.

This petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Tenant Protection Act reads as follows:

"Whereas the new Tenant Protection Act allows landlords to charge tenants who move into an apartment whatever rent the landlord wishes, resulting in significantly higher rents across Ontario, with the consequence of increasing inflation, loss of jobs and increasing numbers of homeless people;

"Whereas the new Tenant Protection Act has removed the requirement for landlords to submit a cost-revenue statement to justify a higher-than-guideline rent increase;

"Whereas the new Tenant Protection Act has increased the allowable, higher-than-guideline rent increase maximum for capital expenditures from 3% to 4% and no restrictions have been imposed on the number of consecutive annual applications that can be made by a landlord for these increases;

"Whereas current legislation and government policy make it easier to demolish or convert existing affordable rental housing to condominiums and do not address the issue of converting reasonably priced senior rental units to care homes or retirement life communities with expensive personal services;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has eliminated the valuable information provided in the rent registry;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to freeze any possible apartment rent

increases for a period of two years, during which time a comprehensive review of the impact that this Tenant Protection Act, 1997, has had on the affordable housing in Ontario is activated. This review is to include public input meetings and the development of suitable amendments to this act to provide greater protection for Ontario's tenants."

HYDRO ONE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$6-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

It's signed by a number of residents from Ridgetown and I too have signed this petition.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One, which includes Ontario's electricity transmission grid;

"Whereas there's been little evidence and no public case which proves that selling the grid will benefit electricity consumers;

"Whereas the selling off of the transmission grid is one of the largest privatizations in Canadian history;

"Whereas the Conservative government never campaigned on the selling off of this public asset, and the people of Ontario have not been consulted on this plan;

"Whereas the government does not have a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario;

"Whereas this sale is proceeding too hastily and without transparency;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand that the Conservative government of Ontario under Premier Ernie Eves move immediately to halt the sale of Hydro One."

I affix my signature to this petition.

1600

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector, when Bill 58 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time, the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government; and

That the vote on second reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day, during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That the committee shall be authorized to meet for the purpose of conducting public hearings in Toronto on Tuesday, June 18, 2002, Wednesday, June 19, 2002, and Thursday, June 20, 2002; in Kingston on the morning of Friday, June 21, 2002, and in Ottawa on the afternoon of Friday, June 21, 2002; in London on the morning of Saturday, June 22, 2002, and in Chatham on the afternoon of Saturday, June 22, 2002;

That the committee be further authorized to meet on Monday, June 24, 2002, and the morning of Tuesday, June 25, 2002, in Toronto for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

That, on all of the dates specified, the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet outside of its regularly scheduled meeting times, and beyond its normal hour of adjournment, but when meeting in Toronto, not during routine proceedings, and that the committee be authorized to meet on June 24, 2002 until 9:30 pm.

That pursuant to standing order 75(c), the Chair of the standing committee shall establish the deadline for the tabling of amendments or for filing them with the clerk of the committee;

That, at 9:30 am on Tuesday, June 25, 2002, those amendments which have not been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill, and any amendments thereto;

Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day that reports from committees may be received following the completion of clause-by-clause consideration, and not later than June 25, 2002.

In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

When the order for third reading is called, that 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, to be divided equally among all recognized parties, and at the end of that time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the third reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Mr Baird has moved government notice of motion number 11. I look to the government for a speaker. Mr Baird, you have the floor.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I expect I will be speaking on this issue for about three or four minutes, maybe five minutes, I say to my colleague the whip from the official opposition, my good friend the member for Sudbury.

This bill has been debated for some time. There has been a terrific debate around the province of Ontario about the intentions with respect to the bill. At this time we'd like to send the bill out to public hearings, to go to four communities and, as well, to hear deputations in the city of Toronto, so that we can have the opportunity to render a verdict on the bill, which is an important part of the process.

Furthermore, I would move that government notice of motion number 11 be amended as follows:

That the third paragraph be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"That the committee shall be authorized to meet for the purpose of conducting public hearings in Toronto on Tuesday, June 18, 2002, Wednesday, June 19, 2002, and Thursday, June 20, 2002. The committee is further authorized to meet for the purpose of conducting public hearings on Friday, June 21, and Saturday, June 22, in locations to be determined by the committee;"

That the fourth paragraph be amended by deleting the words "Monday, June 24, 2002"; and the fifth paragraph be amended by deleting all of the words following the words "routine proceedings"; and the seventh paragraph be amended by deleting the time "9:30 am" and substituting "11 am" therefor.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Baird, you have the floor again.

Hon Mr Baird: I conclude my remarks with the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I'd like to move an amendment to the time allocation motion on Bill 58.

I move that the motion be amended by striking out the 13th and 14th paragraphs of this motion as it appears on the Orders and Notices paper and substituting the following: "That the vote on third reading should not take place before June 3, 2004."

The Deputy Speaker: I need you to send the paper-work over. We just have to have a look at it. Please wait just a moment before you take the floor.

To the member for Windsor West—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. This would involve you, I say to the chief government whip.

Member for Windsor West, your amendment would ordinarily be fine except that we already have an amendment on the floor. So the only thing that would really be allowed would be an amendment to the amendment. Having said that, it may indeed be possible that in working with the chief government whip and perhaps the third party, there may be agreement to incorporate this into the amendment. I'll leave that up to you. But as things stand at this moment, I have to rule your amendment out of order because we already have Mr Baird's amendment on the floor. It is in order, and nothing else can be introduced until it has been disposed of. With that, I'm in your hands as to how you'd like to proceed.

Mrs Pupatello: Speaker, if I'm requesting an amendment to the amendment, then, would that paper be in order?

The Deputy Speaker: Let me just check. It would actually have to amend the amendment and deal with the issues that are contained in the amendment, which is why it would require the co-operation of the mover of the amendment to then modify that, with agreement of the House that that's what we would debate.

Mrs Pupatello: Speaker, I'd like to call for an amendment to the amendment so that it be written that it would be in order and that what we are writing is in fact moving an amendment to what the chief whip has just introduced.

The Deputy Speaker: I think we're still at the point where just changing the name of it from an amendment to an amendment to the amendment doesn't change the fact that it's still out of order, because it doesn't address the amendment. I don't want to spend too much more time on this, but that's where we are. You can't just say "It's an amendment to the amendment, then, to make you happy, Speaker." It truly has to amend the amendment; yours doesn't. It deals with other paragraphs contained in the original motion. Go ahead, member.

1610

Mrs Pupatello: Thanks for your indulgence, Speaker. Because my motion is actually calling for those para-

graphs to be amended such that the vote on third reading should not take place before June 3, 2004, I'm hoping the Speaker would find that in order, as it's dealing with the amendment of the original motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Here's where we are. This amendment, as it's been presented to me, is out of order. At this point, I do not have an amendment to the amendment. If I receive such an amendment and it's in order, I will entertain it. You may move it any time. It may still be out of order. That will be determined by how you word it and what you present. Therefore, the amendment to the motion is in order. To the member for Windsor West, the amendment you've moved is out of order. That amendment does not exist as of this moment.

You now have the floor. Please start the clock.

Mrs Pupatello: I appreciate that, Speaker. Ideally, within the next few moments I'll have an additional copy of an amendment to the amendment which you'll find perfectly in order. I appreciate the Speaker's indulgence.

Let me tell you why this is such an important amendment to the amendment. It's because it reads clearly that the vote on third reading should not take place before June 3, 2004. What is so critical about this amendment to what has been introduced today—that is, the amendment of the government's bill—is that we don't know. When the people went to the polls and elected this majority government of the PC Party, they had no idea that this government would engage in the selling of Hydro One. That is something that came as much to the surprise of those on Bay Street as to the caucus in this very House. When Mike Harris, before he resigned as leader, stood up, unbeknownst to many people across the province, and announced the sale of Hydro One, it was a big surprise.

We say this is completely unreasonable. We believe the people of Ontario should have an outright say on whether Hydro One should be sold. You and I, all of us on all sides of the House, acknowledged time and time again that many things over the history of Ontario Hydro should have been changed, should have been different. But here we are today with Ontario Hydro being broken up into five different companies. What does that mean to my neighbours? What does that mean to the people of Windsor West or the people of Wawa or the people of any place in Ontario, small town or large city? What is happening with Hydro in Ontario?

There is confusion between the generation and transmission of power. What we need to understand today is that Hydro One is about the highway series of electricity. It's about the highway system that is a natural monopoly controlled by the government, and that's where it should stay. Hydro One in fact should not be sold. That is the Ontario Liberal Party position. That is what I and my caucus colleagues believe is the position of most people in Ontario. Because of that, I believe we should be able to go back to the people and ask the people, in the form of a general election, whether they believe this historic sale of a government asset in fact should go forward. If they believe you should do it, you will have had an entire

election campaign going door to door, going into your local riding debates and explaining away why the number one question that's been asked repeatedly in this House about the sale of Hydro One is, "Why?" No one has been able to answer that question.

I remember when the Minister of Energy brought into this House in 1998 the bill that was going to make a wholesale change of Ontario Hydro. At that time, he laid out various caveats to that bill. He said the price would go down, what the consumers pay would go down. He also set out a number of other things, none of which has happened. I can tell you that most residents of Ontario have seen the prices of their bills go up. So if we know the one thing that people care the most about—how much they pay—then we know that the government has not been honest with them. The government told them they were moving forward with changes and that the changes would see better pricing; in fact, we have more expensive electricity today than ever. How could the people believe that things would get better when they go forward to sell Hydro One, which is the electricity transmission grid?

So I ask this government to seriously consider, if you choose to move forward in this direction, to go to the people and ask them. That is a very reasonable thing to do. When we held hearings in my community and we brought people in who were interested, when Sean Conway came to my riding to talk to people, he received the same response that I've gotten everywhere we go to talk about Hydro: people do not want to see the sale of Hydro One, the single largest sale of a public asset in the history of the nation, with barely that kind of consensus-building that the government ought to have for such a major move. And because of this, we think that's wrong. We think you should wait. We think that if you'd gone to the people and the people gave you the mandate—you had mandates for other sales of public assets, because in your own campaign documents you spoke about the sale of LCBO, you spoke about the sale of TVO. But the difference between those organizations and Hydro One, I guess, is who happens to head them up. We have the ever popular Andy Brandt, the big favourite Tory over there, heading up LCBO, and we can't create too many waves for Andy, and on the other side we have the Premier's life partner, who's heading up TVO; the point being that those were items that were in your document, but the sale of Hydro One was not in your document.

Because of this, when we can bring forward this amendment to an amendment, which we hope the Speaker will find in order, we are suggesting that that vote not be held until after you've gone to the people in a general election and asked their permission for that.

The Deputy Speaker: There was no determination whether we do it in bloc or rotation. Usually it's in rotation, so I will look to the third party. OK. Government? You're going to get the floor anyway. Member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and—

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): She was up.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry. My apologies. Member for Scarborough Centre.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Thank you. It is one of the problems of being vertically challenged, Mr Speaker, especially being to the extreme right of this House. So I will try to shout a little louder the next time.

The Deputy Speaker: My apologies for the oversight.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

If Bill 58 is passed by this Legislature, it would provide broad authority to determine the future of Hydro One. As well, it would give us more flexibility to meet the government's objectives for Ontario's electricity sector. There's no doubt that the first priority in meeting these objectives is to ensure that consumers are protected, and that's been clear right from the very start when the wholesale and retail electricity markets were designed. The government made the commitment to fix the problems of the past, to safeguard our future electricity supply and to ensure that safe, reliable power will continue to be supplied to consumers at competitive rates.

May 1, when our electricity market was opened to competition, marked an exciting new era in Ontario's history. Notwithstanding all the doom-and-gloom predictions by the Liberals and the NDP, I have to tell you that the transition was very successful. Electricity prices for May were 33% lower than the 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour that was the norm prior to market opening. This is very good news for my constituents in Scarborough Centre, as well as consumers across the province. In fact, the government made sure that Ontario's new market has all the key ingredients to function smoothly, especially with respect to adequate supply and a robust market design. As the market matures we should see other benefits, including greater efficiencies, better service and innovation.

1620

As with other jurisdictions that have successfully made the transition to competition, and there are a great many despite the fact that the Liberals and the NDP don't believe so, we firmly believe that market competition, commercial discipline and strong regulation are the best guarantee of reasonable prices for customers over the long term. I appreciate the fact that the Liberal members across the way support the basic principles of these elements.

For the first time, Ontario's 4.1 million residential electricity customers have two choices—choice, something that we all believe in, especially freedom of choice—in buying their power. They can decide to do nothing and their local utility will continue to supply them with power at a variable or spot-market rate with supply and demand determining the price, or they can purchase their electricity at a fixed rate from one of several retailers licensed by the Ontario Energy Board. It is altogether the customer's choice based on their individual circumstances and preferences. Who could be against that? No matter what choice customers make, their local utility will continue to deliver electricity and bill customers for transmission and distribution and still be responsible for the safety and reliability of local dis-

tribution, just as in the past. In fact, nothing has changed in terms of my own personal electricity bill.

Furthermore, the government has established the Independent Electricity Market Operator, or the IMO as it's known for short, to oversee the wholesale market and grid operations of our electricity system.

It's important to recognize that by law the IMO must protect the interests of customers with respect to reliability and the quality of electricity services in Ontario. The government has provided the Ontario Energy Board with the tools that it needs to protect customers by putting in place tough consumer protection laws for energy retailers. These require them to operate fairly and honestly. The energy board is mandated to oversee the retailing practices of marketers and deals with those engaging in questionable practices. For example, all retailers must be licensed by the energy board. As a condition of their licences, they must follow the electricity retailer code of conduct's guidelines and standards. Retailers must provide identification when retailing door to door, to indicate that they don't represent a distribution utility, to clearly state the price and other terms, and to provide a clearly printed contract. The offer must clearly indicate the price, any other fees, length of contract and any other terms, such as cancellation charges, renewal terms and transferral or assignment of the contract. Retailers are required to give a customer ample time to understand an offer without pressure or harassment. No customer is required, for instance, to show their electricity bill or any other information to a retailer unless they decide to sign a contract with that retailer. If there are problems, the energy board has the authority to levy financial penalties against a retailer or revoke or suspend its licence. The energy board also has a dispute resolution process in place. The director of licensing is empowered to make a ruling if the dispute can't be resolved with the retailer.

The government's proposed Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act goes even further to enhance the current consumer protection by including reforms to further strengthen the Ontario Energy Board's powers against unfair marketing and retailing practices; enacting a new energy consumers' bill of rights which would place new requirements on gas and electricity retailers dealing with consumers; and providing the Ontario Energy Board with new enforcement powers and strengthening the market surveillance powers of the Independent Electricity Market Operator's market surveillance panel.

There are other aspects of the proposed legislation that are designed to protect the consumer, such as the energy consumers' bill of rights and new enforcement powers for the Ontario Energy Board and market surveillance. The proposed legislation would give the Ontario Energy Board enhanced powers to inform a new regime, including more powers to order compliance and attach conditions, and the ability to levy administrative penalties on retailers and marketers for these new requirements. The penalties would be up to \$10,000 a day.

These are just a few of the protections that are built in to protect the interests of consumers.

In conclusion, the government has introduced this legislation in order to ensure that strong consumer protections are in place and that electricity customers and future generations of Ontarians have access to an efficient, competitive supply of electricity. As we move forward with the restructuring of our electricity market, the government will continue to put the needs of Ontario's electricity customers first and to ensure that their interests are protected. That is why I am happy to support this legislation today.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr Speaker, as a follow-up to your direction, I would like to introduce an amendment to the amendment—I believe the table has a copy of this—that the amendment to government notice of motion number 11 be amended by adding the following:

The 13th and 14th paragraphs be struck out and the following substituted:

"That the vote on the third reading should not take place before June 3, 2004."

I'll provide this copy for your consideration.

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment to the amendment is indeed in order, and therefore you may continue speaking to the amendment to the amendment.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I have to say that it is with regret that I have to stand in my place again today to speak to yet another time allocation motion. I think the point I would like to stress in this debate is that this is probably one of the most significant issues that this House will consider in terms of business on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario. The bill was introduced a little more than a week ago and already the government has moved to close debate on this most significant issue.

Of course it is an issue from the perspective of a member of the opposition, but I also look to the people in my riding who have contacted me in significant numbers. In fact, I can't think of an issue that has garnered more reaction from the people of Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington than the proposal to sell Hydro One. There are lots of issues among many of my constituents and, I'm also given to understand, indeed across the province. Yet it would appear we have a government that is not prepared to consider the very important and valid issues raised by the people of the province with respect to this piece of legislation.

1630

The member for Scarborough Centre indicated in her remarks that Bill 58 was proposed to ensure a safe and reliable power source for the people of Ontario. I have to say that until the time Premier Mike Harris indicated it was the intention of the government to sell Hydro One, I had not had a single complaint on file about the safety or reliability of the power source in Ontario. I think that begs the question why the government is moving in this direction.

I want to talk to you too about municipalities that have come to me and indicated that in good faith they entered into arrangements with Hydro One with the very clear

understanding that they were selling their utility. They did have other options to consider, but at no time was it ever indicated to them, when they were considering the business deal, that Hydro One would be privatized.

So you had a public entity that had provided a public service in a very effective and efficient way to people within the community, thinking, "Well, if we can no longer be in this business, then we want to sell it to another publicly run manager." That's why they sold their public utility to Hydro One, only to find out after the fact that it was going to be privatized. Many municipalities feel they have been duped, that had they known this was the plan of the government, they might have made other considerations.

The consumer protection in the bill: certainly we on this side of the House have been advocating for, and the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has been on his feet many times to talk about, the need for consumer protection. We're saying it's too little too late, and there are literally thousands of Ontarians who find themselves in contracts they are very sorry they signed.

I want to commend my colleague the member for York West for the good work he has done in laying the groundwork, the foundation, for legislation to protect our hydro corridors, which is in this bill.

My concluding remark is that I am very sorry that on this most important issue, about which there is so much we should be debating and talking about and putting forward ideas from the people of this province, we have very little time now to do that in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? Further debate?

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Mr Speaker, I'm not surprised that there aren't people standing up quickly, because this is a debate on time allocation and closure. Before I make a few comments about what the legislation is trying to deal with, it's really important to know that this particular government, the Harris-Eves government, is the most active government by a long shot throughout all the jurisdictions—among all the provinces and territories—in terms of closing off debate and time-allocating bills. The Ernie Eves government seems to be going down the same path: time-allocate anything of significance. If it's something all parties agree to, that's fine. Then we'll talk about hearings and we'll take time. The thermometer of the length of time of debate is directly related to the lack of importance of the bill, in relative terms, because of course all bills are important.

When we want to talk about licences for young people and operating water vehicles, the government is happy to spend weeks of hearings throughout the province. Why do we need to do that when all parties agreed? It's not a problem. We want to talk about health issues, we want to talk about the environment, we want to talk about energy and the future ownership and what should go on, and under the guise of expediency we cannot do this. Of course the member from Scarborough Centre knows this, because he's been part of many closure items in this House.

The government says we have the opportunity to have hearings in some communities. I can appreciate the desire to have this by the time we leave at the end of this short session, but we could meet for longer periods of time. This is extremely important. Believe me, when I talk to people in my riding, other than the CHEO issue—trying to centralize pediatric heart surgery in Toronto—Hydro is the issue on which I receive the greatest number of e-mails, phone calls and questions. People are very nervous. They're not just nervous about the rising costs related to their particular prognosis of the future and what that's going to mean to them; they're worried about what's going to happen to the whole infrastructure of this industry, and in particular Hydro One, the infrastructure of our province.

It's interesting that we have here a ruling from Judge Gans, who kind of spoiled the schedule for the government and kind of put a stick in the spokes of the government and slowed them down, but still they're moving ahead with the legislation. They didn't want to move ahead with an inquest in Ipperwash, but they move ahead now, even though this is before the courts. They could very well proceed if they chose to proceed. It really comes down to political will, and I think that's an important thing.

My time is up. I'm sorry, but so many of my colleagues wish to speak to this motion that I will sit down and allow them to voice their opinions.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I only have four or five minutes as well, so I will not spend any time dealing with the fact that this is another closure motion and that this government has invoked closure at least 86% of the time according to the independent study I conducted through the legislative research department here.

From listening to the one government member who has spoken about the substance of this bill—

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: When someone quotes from a study, at times they are requested, when they quote from it on regular occasions and numerous times, which the member has done, to table that study. I wish he'd table that study.

Mr Gerretsen: You can have the study.

The Deputy Speaker: Hold on; you don't have the floor yet. I'm going to answer the point of order.

I think the government House leader knows there hasn't been a great deal of excess reference to it, so at this point I don't believe that triggers that part of the standing orders.

The member has the floor again.

Mr Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Speaker. He can get it right out of the legislative library. It's number 010978.

I would like to talk about the substance of the bill, because that's a heck of a lot more important in this particular case. The one government member who got up here today talked about the consumer protection aspect of the bill. Let there be no mistake about it: we are all in

favour of that. I dare say everyone in the House is in favour of greater consumer protection as far as the people who have been asked to sign these contracts are concerned. The problem is, that's not really what this bill is about. This bill is really about the sale of Hydro One.

The government has taken these two issues, one on which we all agree and one on which certainly the two opposition parties don't agree at all, and put them in one bill, and the government keeps talking about consumer protection as if that's the only thing that's in the bill.

The relevant section in this bill, that it is really all about, is section 49, and let me just read it to you. It's as clear as pie as far as what the government wants to do with this. It is a very simple section that says, "The minister, on behalf of Her Majesty in right of Ontario, may acquire, hold, dispose of and otherwise deal with securities or debt obligations of, or any other interest in, Hydro One Inc...." It's the "any other interest in" Hydro One that basically gives the minister, once this legislation is passed, a blank cheque to sell Hydro One.

1640

Speaker, you and I know, and everyone I've spoken to over the last six months about this issue, from the people who hold the most right-wing view of things to the people who hold the most left view of things, agrees on one thing: why are we selling Hydro One? They think it is the most ridiculous thing they have heard, and the only argument the government has advanced is that we have this stranded debt and we have to pay it off.

The interesting thing is, you may get \$5 billion or \$6 billion for it, so you sell it, and what have you got? You haven't got the asset any more. This is the main asset that's owned by the province of Ontario—all of the grid, the wires that are out there. Why are we selling it? It would be like selling your house in order to get rid of the mortgage debt, which is absolute nonsense.

What this government has to do and what our amendment is really all about is to call an election over this issue. Call an election right now. Now, the minister's laughing about it, but I can tell you there is no other single issue that I've been involved with here over the last seven years, other than the ongoing problems with the health care system, about which the people of Ontario are getting more and more upset. I would dare say that the government somehow thinks this is mainly some sort of left-of-centre plot that these people don't want to sell Hydro One etc, etc. I find it very interesting that in my riding I have heard from an awful lot of people who have traditionally supported this government and traditionally supported the Conservative Party. These people cannot understand why we're selling this.

While I'm at it, we keep talking about this stranded debt situation. Let me first of all say that's a horrible situation to be in and undoubtedly it's due to an awful lot of mismanagement. But if something is mismanaged, do you get rid of the company? No. You change the management structure. You deal with the problem that exists and you change the management system or whatever needs to be done. You don't get rid of the company.

Let's be clear about this. Over the last 100 years, whichever government was in power, of whatever political stripe, they have all used the hydro power rates in this province as an economic development tool in order to get industry to locate all over this province, from which we've all benefited. So when we talk about the stranded debt, it has nothing to do with whether or not we actually charge the cost of the electricity that was produced from time to time; it has an awful lot to do with the fact that we like to produce and cost out the cheapest electricity possible in order to get industry to come into this province. All governments over the last 100 years have been guilty of that.

Do we have to deal with the debt situation? Absolutely. But do you deal with it by in effect selling the main asset of the electrical industry? That is just so absurd and insane that I cannot understand how this government or any government would even contemplate that. If the government at least had some sort of rationale as to why they wanted to do it, we would have something to debate and argue about. But I can tell you, Speaker—I'm getting signals here as to when to stop—I feel very strongly about this issue. I feel very, very strongly about this issue. It would be akin to selling all the four-lane highways in Ontario.

Hon Mr Baird: Don't give us any ideas.

Mr Gerretsen: Listen to the government whip: "Don't give us any ideas."

You can recall the tremendous outcry there was with respect to the sale of the 407, which is now costing people three times as much to ride on than it was originally four or five years ago when it was first privatized. But this is so much worse. There is only one grid system out there. People have no other choice. At least with highways you can get off the four-lane highways and go on to the local roads. You can't do that in this case. So I beg and plead with the government: do the right thing. Come up with some other scheme or whatever you want to do, but do not sell this very crucial asset that the people of Ontario have worked for, not only in this generation but over the last 100 years. This is the one main intricate part of the electricity system that basically connects the generation with the distribution, and it must remain in public hands.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): The message from the people in my riding is very simple: don't even think about it. We will never buy something as cheap as something we already own. This is a provincial asset that has been good for individuals, it's been good for our economy, good for our businesses.

We live in a brutally cold climate here at times. This has a potential to force greatly increased rates on to our seniors, on to people on fixed incomes, on to everyone.

Industry faces a challenge here in Ontario. We're a long way from a lot of the markets that we sell into. We have, as I mentioned earlier, a very difficult climate. It is difficult for a number of companies to work 12 months a year. The advantage we've had that has enabled us to compete very successfully with the rest of North America

has been electricity at cost, and part of that has been attributed to the fact that we own the distribution system and it's been distributed at cost. This is not a luxury. This is an absolute necessity that just begs for government control of it.

There's certainly the talk about all the regulations that are going to be put in place. These regulations are being put in place to protect us from who they're going to sell it to. We wouldn't need all of these regulations if we, the people, continued to own it, as was the original intent and has worked well for many years.

The people of Ontario have become an experiment for this government. "Let's try changing health care." It didn't work. "Let's try changing education." It didn't work. "Let's try selling the 407." The rates skyrocketed. It is time we ceased being victims of this government and the government recognized that this is too fundamentally important an issue to the people of Ontario to be played around and experimented with. It is time we learned from others. Yes, they can say deregulation and the selling is working in Alberta. It's working in Alberta because that government has buckets of money from oil revenues to give people reimbursements, otherwise they would be freezing to death in the dark, literally, out there.

They've talked about California. What we've seen in California is how easily Enron could take and manipulate the costs. We don't want to be party to that. For goodness' sake, let's learn something about what's going on out there. In fact, interestingly, in Alberta and then in California where Enron was playing around with it—this government has put up a firewall that would prevent the citizens from knowing whether a generator was down and which particular one it was. We're seeing an era of secrecy on all of the dealings that this government does and Hydro One would be absolutely no different.

The people of Ontario are being forced to gamble right now. Do you go with a fixed contract and is the price that's being offered fair or not, or do you take the fluctuating price and try to budget out over the months or over the year? It is a gamble that the people of Ontario never had to participate in before. The only thing we can assure them of is that costs are going to go up.

Consultation has been a joke with this. This government has consulted with Bay Street—not made the consultations public but they've consulted with Bay Street. They have faked the consultation with the public. They have said, "Come and tell us how we can sell it. Don't come and tell us whether or not we can sell it. We're interested; our minds are made up."

There's only one set of wires to each house. It is absolutely vital that those wires be maintained in public ownership. We cannot have a monopoly with a firm looking for a profit. We need a monopoly that is in the best interests of the citizens.

If there are problems with Hydro One, then fix it. I don't think it's too much to ask our government to fix it. But to simply abdicate responsibilities and turn it over—you know, we need to listen to the people of Ontario. This was not in the last election platform. This is not going to be a subject of a referendum or an election.

Their great experiment with education has been a failure, but it can be fixed. The great experiment with health care has been a failure, but it can be fixed. But the sale of Hydro One, if that fatal error is made, cannot be reversed, cannot be fixed. We need to recognize the responsibility of government is not to Bay Street, not to a Premier who's seconded from Bay Street for a while to complete a mission. We need to remember who put us here as politicians. It is easy to get politicianitis and think we know what's best for Ontario. Go stand on a street corner and talk to the citizens. In all of the time that this has been an issue, I have not had one citizen say to me, "Hydro One should be sold," while I've had literally hundreds and hundreds say to me, "Please protect our asset. It's important that in Ontario we continue to have electricity that is ours and that the rate can be controlled."

This is probably the worst move this government could have considered, and I think it is characteristic that they have attempted to sneak it through. Thank goodness for the courts that intervened and drew the line. In some sense, we need courts to keep this government under control.

1650

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The Chair recognizes one of the two of you. It's up to you. The member for—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): St Catharines.

The Deputy Speaker: St Catharines, yes, who, I was going to add, has been here 25 years. I add my personal congratulations on that.

Mr Bradley: Thank you very much.

I'm disappointed to see that we're into a time allocation on a bill of this kind. I really think that had the Legislature come back earlier, had the Legislature not been absent from sitting from the middle of December until the very middle of May, we would have had lots of time to be able to deal with this legislation. I know that many of my colleagues feel the same way about this particular bill.

Most people I've talked to, the experts in the field or just the average citizen out there who has an interest, say the one thing you should keep in public hands is the transmission system. We are, I'm telling you, to a person opposed to this legislation only because we believe that there are some things that should stay in public hands and public control. The matters related to security, particularly after September 11 of last year, militate in favour of keeping an asset of this kind in public control and under public security. We happen to believe that with the amendments that could have been proposed for this, if they had been accepted for this bill, if the government had thought it through better and brought it in earlier, we would have a much superior piece of legislation.

As I say, I've talked to people who have worked in this field, in the electrical field, whether it's municipal or provincial. To a person, they say that you want to keep this asset in public hands, because that's exceedingly important. The public may have been in a mood for divesting some of the assets the government had a num-

ber of years ago. That mood, if it were ever really true, has shifted considerably now. To sell off the transmission system, which is essentially like selling the 400-series highways, or the major highways in this province, would be ill-advised. It would be similar to saying that there are a lot of people out there using the highways but somehow the private sector should be running the highways. I think the public says that, yes, there should be individual transportation companies out there, private and public, but what they want to see is that their government is in full control of the highways, full ownership of the highways. This is a highway in itself, being a transmission system.

Really, what this is about, it seems to me, is the government again engaged in a fire sale, wanting to get rid of an asset so they'll be able to balance a budget, so their books will look much better. I think one always has to look at the long-term effects, however, because I've seen this pattern taking place. I was discussing with some people yesterday this whole idea of selling off an asset, as though you somehow sell your house and, yes, you've got all that money, but the next year you don't have the house and perhaps the money is gone because you've sold it off for a specific purpose. Even people I've found who would be normally Conservative, and I mean PC, have said to me, as I'm sure they've said to many people, "We don't want to see this asset divested; we don't want to see this go into private hands. This is one asset we want to see stay in public hands. Do we want to see it managed better? Most assuredly, because there have been problems with management. We understand that."

So they do want to see it in the public sector and they do want to see it managed better. I'm just disappointed that the government has not allowed for the kind of public hearings that my friend from Scarborough East and I would like to have so we could hear from people around the province, as we did on the alternative fuels committee. That would have been a good model, but the government is determined to shove this through before the end of an abbreviated session. That's unfortunate.

Mr Gerretsen: On a point of order, Speaker: Normally during this kind of debate it goes in rotation and it goes in such a way that every party can respond to what every other party says. In this particular case, the Liberals have been forced—because of the government members and the NDP members not getting up—to use up all of our time and the other two parties can still keep on speaking for the next hour.

Speaker, the debate would have collapsed if we had not gotten up at that time. I would ask you to rule on whether or not it is fair, in the interpretation of the rules, for the debate not to take place the way it normally does whereby we go in rotation, which didn't happen in this particular case. I await your ruling.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Mr Speaker, with respect to the rotation and time taken during these periods, it is completely acceptable for anyone to stand up during their period of time to speak. If the Liberals choose to stand up and use all their time, that is the way it is. If at that point in time the debate collapses, then the debate collapses. There is nothing that you as Speaker can do to rectify

change, nor should you do that. It's completely up to the House as to where they go from there.

The Deputy Speaker: On the point of order, let me just say that had the caucus of the official opposition chosen not to speak and rise on the amendment to the amendment, then the debate would have collapsed. We have moved to a vote on the amendment to the amendment. We then would have reverted to the amendment, in which case any caucus that had time remaining would be in order to use that time in rotation for debate.

I believe that disposes of the matter. The floor is now open for further debate.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Indeed, it is my privilege to add a few thoughts and respond to the collective wisdom of the official opposition and to look forward, I guess, to the repetitive rants from the third party when they decide to stand up and make their very predictable points.

Let's start back at square one on this bill. Its roots are found in another activist judge who has decided, un-elected as he is, that he should be the authority on the legislation that governs the people of this province. It's quite remarkable to me, and I think to anyone else who considers themselves a student of Canadian history and of our rights and responsibilities, that any judge would argue that someone doesn't have the right to sell an asset that they own. Whether it's the government of Ontario or an individual citizen, we didn't have the right, in the eyes of Judge Gans, to buy, to sell, to lease, to make any other change to, as the lawyers would say, alienate their rights to a particular piece of property. It's the very first lesson that lawyers get on the subject of property law, the alienation of property. But in the eyes of this judge, somehow you needed a special law to say that the Ontario government had to have property rights. Well, he's wrong and we will continue to challenge him in the courts. I'm sure the esteemed justices higher up the totem pole will come to a very different opinion than Judge Gans.

In the meantime, it would be preposterous to suggest that the government should not be allowed to move forward and exercise its rights to look at what's in the best interests of taxpayers and hydro ratepayers all across the province of Ontario, because that was at the root of the original decision to look at changes to the electricity marketplace.

1700

So far in the debate we've heard lots of sidebars into hospitals and other very extraneous issues from the official opposition, but we've heard no sidebars into a discussion of the other major change to the electricity marketplace, namely the opening up of competition on the generation side. Mr Speaker, that took place on May 1. You will know that on the day before competition was allowed in this province, every utility, on behalf of its ratepayers, was paying 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour for power. Since then, the sky has not fallen. The Chicken Little from the NDP and the Liberal Party have been proven wrong, because the average price for power has

been fully one third below the April 30 reference price every day since the market opened on May 1.

In fact, I just called up www.theimo.com on the Internet, where you can find out from the actual entity that manages the distribution of power throughout Ontario what the up-to-the-minute price for electricity is. You will find that the average price this past week has again been only 3.217 cents per kilowatt hour. Remember, it was 4.3 cents before. It's now 3.2 cents today. That is hardly a crisis. That is hardly something the ratepayers should have offered up, in the context of the fear-mongering from the Liberals and NDP, as something they should fear and dread.

Despite a challenge weeks ago in this House, the members opposite have yet to come up with any other product or service that they've ever seen in the marketplace that has faced a price increase when more people offer more supply into the market. Ten years ago we saw the opening up of the telecommunications marketplace. As I said in debate last week, when the whole family is gathered around them at Christmas, I'm sure Grandpa Bradley and Grandpa Hampton gather all the little kiddies on their knees and share all the wonderful stories of how great it was to have Ma Bell as our sole phone choice. Yes, how great it was to get that bill increasing year after year, to have no choice when the service was terrible and they told you they couldn't come to fix your ripped phone cord. "Maybe this week, maybe a month from now. Who knows? But no one else is allowed to touch that phone wire." Of course, if Grandpa Jim over here had to call a relative back in the old country, we measured the cost in dollars per minute, not minutes per dollar, which is the case today.

There is a classic example of how a monopoly that had for almost 100 years supposedly served the people of this country well—it was revealed what a fraud that was. Anyone who defended the status quo before the opening of the telecommunications market to competition was shown to be absolutely all wet when it came to the arguments of why you would have maintained a monopoly in the face of potential competition. The same is going to take place, I submit to you, when it comes to electricity marketing in the months and years to come.

One of the members opposite suggested this was an issue we should call an election over. I know they keep losing time and time again on the other side. They didn't quite make it in the 1990 election, the 1995 election or the 1999 election. I'm sure there are Liberal members who just believe the law of averages, that sooner or later they won't have to come up with good ideas, a credible leader or any kind of tangible proof that they've got what it takes to listen to the people of this province and to articulate legislation that will truly move this province forward. It's just like spinning a wheel at the CNE. "Let's go down there and hope that if it spins often enough, one time it's going to come up Liberal." That's not the basis for how democracies operate.

I would challenge the members to go back and look at the Common Sense Revolution, the most comprehensive pre-election platform any political party has ever offered,

provincially or federally, in the history of Canada. You will find a very clear reference to the then Ontario Hydro and the fact that we as a party did not believe the status quo was working. We have heard countless times in this debate, and I'm sure we're going to hear from the leader of the third party, how wonderful the distribution of electricity has been. In fact, they used the phrase at least a half-dozen times in the last hour that "Hydro was selling power at cost." Isn't that a noble objective on behalf of the ratepayers? They were selling hydro at cost.

Mr Speaker, you will know that my background was in retailing. I'm really proud of the fact at that my Canadian Tire store we had an average of about 4,000 products on sale in any given week, more than you would have found at surrounding Canadian Tire stores. It was just something we felt we had to do to bring customers into the store. You might lose a little bit on one product, but you had 40,000 other products that you could make your money back on.

The problem is that in all those 40 years, Ontario Hydro wasn't selling power at cost; they were giving it away. This was a 40-year loss leader. The problem is when the customer came in the door, they didn't have any other products to sell them. The consequence of that was they ran up a debt. As part of this deal of the century, this permanent sale on electricity, the ratepayers may have gotten a good deal, but those same individuals who happened to be taxpayers in Ontario inherited a \$38-billion debt for \$17 billion worth of assets. Great retailing. Any Canadian Tire store that had followed that kind of model would have gone bankrupt within a year. It's only because it was propped up by successive governments that put political expediency in front of fiscal responsibility that we're standing here today having to debate this bill to fix the problem that has vexed the people of this province for 40 long years.

We haven't heard mentioned in the debate so far of one of the other tremendous benefits that the passage of our various pieces of legislation will bring to consumers in Ontario. Access to the grid in the form of the new competitive marketplace for green power is something that now won't happen on a whim of the old Ontario Hydro; it will happen as a matter of right for anyone who wants to set up wind turbines, anyone who wants to develop solar panels as a cladding on the side of an office building, anyone who wants to develop methane recovery programs at landfill sites all across Ontario. As a matter of right they will be able to sell that power into the grid and nobody will be able to stop them.

At that point, it's up to consumers to decide: do they care about the air quality in this province? Do they care about the future for their children and their children's children when it comes to the air they breathe? Is that worth paying a premium? The challenge is out there and I am pleased to see that already many manufacturers, even the city of Toronto in partnership with an energy co-operative, have chosen to start, albeit in a small way, down that path to green power. At the same time, I know that many people have indicated their willingness to buy

power once these new green sources are hooked up and supplying power into the grid.

We have a very long way to go until we can claim that we have totally decarbonized the energy stream in Ontario, but the fact of the matter is, as recently as last week, an all-party, unanimously endorsed report by the select committee on alternative fuel sources was tabled in this Legislature. In there are 141 recommendations. They are perhaps the most thoughtful, the most progressive, the most aggressive and the most comprehensive platform of consumer and business initiatives, tough new standards for the kind of products we're putting in our cars and into our home furnaces, exercising authority where, again, past governments of all stripes in Ontario have dared not tread.

For example, the quality of fuel used in locomotives is 10 times dirtier, we were told in the committee, than the diesel fuel that is supplied for trucks and cars. The only reason no one has ever trod that way is because the operation of railroads is considered to be a federal responsibility. The problem is, for those who wish to maintain that position, there are countless court rulings by good judges who have said that if there is an environmental component, provinces do have the right to apply their standards, to exercise authority and to act in the best interests of their citizens. Our Constitution makes it very clear that environmental concerns are in fact quite within the purview of the members in this chamber. And so as part of that committee, I was struck by the degree of co-operation, the degree of enthusiasm that members from all parties brought to that very, very important discussion. We could stand here and start taking cheap shots back and forth at each other but I don't think that furthers the debate. Having now built the foundation, I think that if all three parties and their respective members who served on that committee were serious, the challenge should be to look at the tangible and concrete ways in which that report can now be moved from a theoretical document to practical applications in the marketplace.

1710

In the scant few days since that report was tabled, we've already seen reactions from biodiesel companies, from fuel cell manufacturers, from a wide variety of industrial leaders who had despaired that Ontario, instead of being the heartland for research and development on alternative fuels, had turned a blind eye or turned its back on the potential economic and environmental benefits of pursuing the expansion of the manufacture and application of those technologies, not just here in Ontario but for export around the world.

I remember a report my father worked on, along with federal MPs and senators and a variety of industrialists, back in 1986 that laid out then, 16 years ago, the future for hydrogen technologies. They forecast that had government—at that point it was the federal government they were addressing—invested the paltry sum of only \$50 million a year in research and development, the payback by now would be \$4 billion in exports every year and 4,000 new high-tech, high-quality jobs. Ontario would have become the place, the focus for fuel cell—in

particular, hydrogen fuel cell—development and manufacture.

It's not too late to catch up now. Whatever has been lost in delaying these decisions, at the same time the technologies have moved forward. While we may have lost some ground, we certainly have not lost the potential to apply wind and solar and biomass and fuel cell technologies to ensure that at least in Ontario the future will be cleaner and greener for our children.

But I hope something else as well, and I'd like to think that my colleagues opposite had the same perspective when they undertook their role in the committee. We're told that barely 50% of the air pollution we suffer under in this province is actually generated within our borders and that fully 50% comes to us courtesy of the United States. If we turned off every engine, every car, every furnace, shut off the air conditioning and let our hydroelectric and other electricity-generating plants shut down, the most we could do is eliminate half of the air pollution. That's not good enough. We need this report and the actions that flow from it to shame our American cousins—and other provinces for that matter, no less so—into following a similar path. It won't be until Detroit Edison, with its 26 coal plants in Michigan, all of them upwind from Windsor and Chatham and London, has turned off or converted to cleaner sources of energy, that we are going to see the kind of potential, the necessary cleaning of our air that I'm sure all of us aspire to see.

Dealing with some of the specifics of moving forward from here, this is a time allocation motion, and like all previous time allocation motions it is a function of the lack of co-operation we received in terms of scheduling time in the House.

One of the things we heard ad nauseam during question period today was a suggestion that when it comes to consulting the people of Ontario, somehow the old way of doing business should continue to be the hallmark of the government, regardless of improved technological access, regardless of new ways that we can reach out and get the viewpoints of people across this province.

I'm very proud to serve as the Chair of one of the standing committees, in fact the standing committee to which it is proposed this bill be ordered. I can tell you that we have on a number of occasions employed video conferencing, and, if the bill is ordered to the standing committee on general government, it is certainly my intention to do the same thing for this bill. On a bill we debated last fall, it meant that for the first time in the history of this province, in all likelihood, people on Manitoulin Island had direct face-to-face contact with the standing committee and had a chance to give their input. It had never happened; in 135 years it had never happened.

So the bottom line is that the technology exists today. No one has ever asked the people of Manitoulin Island, Sioux Lookout, Atikokan or the mining communities that Mr Hampton talked about earlier. Nobody has ever employed any effort, whether it's video conferencing or any other strategy. No one under the Liberal government

or the NDP government ever set foot in any of those communities to which he referred during question period—not once. But we now have the opportunity. I'm going to make it very clear: we intend to take advantage of the technology to make sure that as broad a range of views from as widely dispersed a geographical area as is possible to reach will have access to these hearings.

Here's the other thing that doesn't happen then. We don't spend a fortune on Air Canada, flying for the sake of a few hours' of hearings in Thunder Bay. We can let the same input from all across the north, the east and southwestern Ontario come into Queen's Park. It's as convenient as their nearest community college or many other government offices that have access to video conferencing.

The end game of all that, of course, is going to be to assess the opinions we hear from across the province, to look at the variety of options before us.

Throughout this debate, the members opposite continue to insist they know what the outcome of the Premier's, the ministers' and the government's deliberations on the future of Hydro will be. I marvel at that because, as the parliamentary assistant, it's news to me if that final decision has been made. But if the members on the other side believe they have a crystal ball, I suggest very strongly that before the markets—oh, the markets have now closed, but hopefully in time for tomorrow, while you're tuning in to that crystal ball, spend a few minutes on the stock market page and make yourself very wealthy. Because I think you may find yourself very, very, very embarrassed. It's kind of tough to take both feet out of your mouth after you've wedged them in there. I'm sure that will be what we hear in the last few minutes of the debate here today: more suggestions that they know the outcome.

We are committed to hearing from people all across this province. We are very committed to a future that has four overriding principles: first, that there be an efficient and price-competitive supply of electricity for the people of Ontario, and, for whatever surplus is generated—and there has always been a surplus generated each year—the development of profitable export markets; second, to ensure that the necessary capital is provided to maintain the infrastructure in tip-top shape, to guarantee that we don't face the consequences of what happened during the ice storm just a couple of years ago and the very questionable engineering that had gone into the design of the towers in eastern Ontario; third, to bring some market discipline to Hydro One. The members opposite have been very keen to comment about many things wrong with Hydro One, yet they themselves don't seem to be struck with the contradiction: the very entity that on the one hand they're suggesting we maintain, that is the paragon of virtue, they have on the other hand, during question period, gone to great lengths to eviscerate because of certain decisions made by the board. The fourth point, of course, is to achieve those goals while protecting consumers.

There is so much more we could say on this bill, but since no NDP members have risen in the last five go-

rounds, they must not want to speak. So I move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1720 to 1750.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until all are counted. Thank you. Please be seated.

All those opposed to the motion will please stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk. Thank you. Please be seated.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 7; the nays are 64.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The first item is Mrs Dombrowsky's amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please indicate.

All those opposed, please indicate.

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.

The Deputy Speaker: Those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony	

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hastings, John	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hodgson, Chris	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, Al	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 29; the nays are 45.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

All those in favour of the amendment to the main motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I jumped ahead a little—my mistake. I apologize.

All those in favour, please indicate.

All those opposed?

Let's make sure this is not a procedural thing. Let's be sure this is what it looks like.

On the amendment to the main motion, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please indicate.

Those opposed?

In my opinion, the nays have it. The motion is lost.

On the main motion, is it the pleasure of the House that the main motion carry?

All those in favour, please indicate.

All those opposed, please indicate.

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1806 to 1816.

The Deputy Speaker: Members please take their seats.

Mr Baird has moved government notice of motion number 11. All those in favour of the motion will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hastings, John	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hodgson, Chris	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, Al	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David

The Deputy Speaker: Those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Sergio, Mario

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 45; the nays are 27.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being after 6 of the clock, this House now stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1820.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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Monday 10 June 2002

Lundi 10 juin 2002



Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 10 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 10 juin 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING CODE STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2002
LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LE CODE DU BÂTIMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 6, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement / Projet de loi 124, Loi visant à améliorer la sécurité publique et à accroître l'efficacité dans l'exécution du code du bâtiment.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I want to hear the rest of the speech Rosario Marchese was giving.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): I'm advised that Mr Marchese last had the floor when we had this bill in front of us, but in light of the circumstance right now, we will move to the government members. Debate? OK. Over to the official opposition.

Interjection: We've spoken.

The Deputy Speaker: What about Mr Prue?

Interjection: He's spoken too.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm advised you've already spoken.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Perhaps I should seek clarification from the Speaker: I had spoken for about 20 minutes of the leadoff hour, and I'm given to understand that at some point in the debate—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: I can't hear you. Would the government whip please be quiet. Sorry, say that again.

Mr Prue: I led off the speeches. It was to have been a one-hour speech, and there were only about 20 minutes on the clock. I'm back here today, but there have been some events that have unfolded. I am not exactly sure, but I understand I may have approximately 38 minutes left.

The Deputy Speaker: I'll check. Take your seat, please.

Member for Beaches-East York, I am advised, and have looked at the record myself, that indeed you did have time remaining when you spoke. But since then the

bill has been back in front of the House and rotation has continued. The last person who had the floor was the member for Trinity-Spadina, who at this moment is not able to resume the floor. Therefore, it goes to the government and, if they choose not to speak, to the official opposition.

Member for York West, you've already spoken.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I believe I have about 10 minutes left to speak on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm advised by the table that you do not.

Mr Sergio: May I ask the assistance of the table, please, to see if I have any time left?

The Deputy Speaker: That's already been done, and they're advising me that you do not. I wouldn't make these things up. I have to ask you to please take your seat.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't mind consenting to give Mr Prue his 40 minutes if he wants.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I'm here now. It's OK.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm offering it now, 40 minutes if he wants it. I can't claim I'm going to be this generous in the future.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Beaches-East York, the government House leader has offered. Do you want me to test the House on this or not? No.

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Speaker: There was an agreement of the House leaders that when the rotation came back to my friend, he would be allowed to do the remainder of his lead. I'm here now, ready to go in regular rotation.

The Deputy Speaker: Well, if there are no speakers on the government side and none on the official opposition side, then I will recognize the member for Timmins-James Bay. Let's get on with this.

1850

Mr Bisson: I want to say at the outset of this debate, having run up from downstairs—it's amazing how quickly you can run from the north wing when you need to—in regard to this bill, the Building Code Statute Law Amendment Act, most members would agree that when builders, planners and developers are putting together projects you need to have a system that allows quick and speedy passage of the various permits that people need in order to go ahead and put their projects in place. I guess what kind of bothers me sometimes when the govern-

ment brings in these kinds of bills is that they try to make it look as if, "Oh, my God, up until the time the government came along, everything was terrible in Ontario. People were not able to build in this province until the Tories got here, so we need to bring this legislation in to fix this huge mess."

For the record, there are many municipalities out there that are doing a very good job when it comes to making sure that the interface between the building departments and/or the contractors or developers out there is actually a very good one. I think it was last Saturday or Friday that I was talking to Lionel Bonhomme, who is a developer in our community and who talked about the city of Timmins and about how Timmins has very much improved its record when it comes to interfacing with the builders and developers. He was actually saying he had brought in a particular application for something he was doing and was quite pleased to see the city of Timmins turn that whole thing around in a period of less than two weeks. He said, "It really speaks volumes of the professionalism of the people who work at the city of Timmins in the building department in order to make things like that happen." Certainly in Lionel's case I can tell you there were many occasions in the past when Lionel was sometimes at his wits' end in trying to deal with the city and, along with other developers, at times had a very hard time getting the type of permitting or the kinds of decisions they needed in order to move projects ahead. I'm pleased to see that the city of Timmins has really done a good job in cleaning all that up and that we now see in the city of Timmins a turnaround as quick as that which we saw in that particular project.

The reason I raise that is just to let the government know there are cities out there that are already doing a pretty good job. It's not your legislation that's going to make the situation any better. The point I want to make is that you try to portray this as being a bill that, if it wasn't for you guys doing it, nothing would ever happen in Ontario. I just want to let you know that the city of Timmins is doing a fairly good job there as it is already.

Does that mean to say there's nothing good in this bill? Of course not. There are some good things in this bill, and we need to take the time to make sure people know what they are and we make those particular rules work. But I just want to put out on the record at the very beginning that we shouldn't get into this debate of, "Oh, my God, everything was terrible in Ontario until we brought in this legislation," because, as my good friend from North Bay knows, there's a lot of good work done by municipalities already. I would see this is a step in order to help those municipalities do things even better. So let's put that into the context of the bill.

Second, this bill doesn't impact on Ontarians with disabilities. We had a real opportunity in this bill, if we had so chosen, to say that if we're serious about providing real access in regard to Ontarians with disabilities, this was an opportunity to put inside a bill mechanisms and real ways of making sure Ontario cities, towns and villages become much more accessible to the disabled

community in Ontario. We know that back a ways the government introduced an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. We argued at the time that it didn't have a lot of teeth in it. Yes, it was a step in the right direction, but other than just saying, "Yes, we feel good and we want to do something nice," when you look at the contents of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, there wasn't really a lot there to assist Ontarians with disabilities.

I know that my good friend Mr Prue, when he gets an opportunity to speak, is going to find himself in a position where he would like to see in this particular bill real, concrete steps made in order to deal with making sure Ontarians with disabilities have a mechanism by way of some of the changes in this bill to deal with some of the issues that are important to them. I realize that's part of the Planning Act issue, but this would have been an opportunity to open part of the Planning Act to do that.

Mr Speaker, I wonder if you would just check for quorum, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Of course. Would the table please check for quorum?

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Quorum is present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The member for Timmins-James Bay, please continue.

Mr Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I did think there was a quorum. I was just double-checking the ability of the table to count as quickly as I did.

So I will just say there was an opportunity in this bill to make sure that we really do something for the community in this province that is most in need of support, and that is Ontarians with disabilities. We could have, by way of this bill, also opened up the Planning Act in order to really give teeth to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act so that Ontarians who have disabilities could have dealt with some of the very basic issues in order to make a municipality more accessible.

I was proud, as you were, Mr Speaker, to be a member of the NDP government that did a whole bunch in the Planning Act when it came to making sure—just simple things, like when we go out and buy a bus on the part of the city that we go into buying low-risers. Now, I admit there were some difficulties in doing that, because the technology wasn't all that developed and there were some problems with some of the models through the Orion bus line. But the point is, we had done a number of things like that, policies that said, "When you're buying a bus, make it accessible. When you're building a sidewalk, make sure to cut down the curb. Do the simple things you have to do when you're planning in order to make sure the municipalities are made more accessible." I think this would have been an opportunity for this government to do that. I just say it's unfortunate that we didn't do that with the disability issue.

The other main provision of this bill is the ability of municipalities to contract out the building inspections and plan review work toward what they call a registered code agency, an RCA. This is one I have some difficulty

with. If we want to develop a better environment within municipalities by way of rules to allow people who are developing etc to have less difficulty in trying to do developments, I think we can all accept that from all sides of the House. But what this basically is, this whole idea of developing a registered code agency, is nothing more than allowing—not allowing; it's not even a question of allowing. It's almost mandating municipalities to contract out much of the work that the planners are doing now within the cities.

I know my good friend Mr McDonald across the way, who sat on North Bay city council for a short while, would attest that the people who work for the city of North Bay, as my friend the former mayor of North York, Mr Prue, would know—

Mr Prue: East York.

Mr Bisson: East York. Sorry, I got the wrong—

Mr Prue: I don't look like Mel.

Mr Bisson: You don't look like Mel. I'm sorry. Let me get that real straight. No-o-o-body looks like Mel.

I would just say that there's a lot of good work done in municipalities, and what this bill's going to do, de facto, is force some municipalities to contract out work that is presently being done by their own building departments. I think that is really sad, because that's a bit of a slap in the face to the people who work in building departments. Those people are professional. Yes, at times they're a pain. I know. I've been in contracting for a while, and there were plenty of times when I was frustrated with building departments in various municipalities because they didn't give me what I wanted when I needed it. But you know, quite frankly, there were probably some good reasons why they rejected some of those plans. Sometimes we're trying to cut a few corners in order to make sure that we bring in the project as close to its cost and under as possible to make money for employers, and sometimes we tend to try to cut corners.

What this will do, I am afraid, by moving to these registered code agencies is that first of all it is going to be divesting from municipalities work that's now done by building departments directly over to these contracted-out firms. I think that's wrong, because I think it's a slap in the face to the people who work in building departments. It's almost like saying, "You guys"—or women—"are either too tough or you don't know what you're doing, so therefore we've got to give it to somebody else."

But here's the other thing that I'm really worried about. If you move to a registered code agency, there is going to be competition, I can guarantee you, within the building community in order to shop around to find the registered code agency that's the most user-friendly. Registered code agencies that are out there will go around not by way of direct advertisement, but certainly by way of talking it up within the building community: "if you come to us, we'll give you the least amount of trouble." I think that's really dangerous, because what you could be getting into is in fact a lesser ability on the part of those RCAs to really do their job, to make sure

that the codes are being followed by the province of Ontario, to make sure that building projects, once they're built, are projects that are quite frankly doing construction in a way that's safe for the people those buildings are going to serve.

What you're going to end up with is a sort of competition. Contractors are going to say, "Well, you know what? I can choose to go to two or three different registered code agencies, the people who will do all the approval of the plans." You can go to code agency A, but, "We know they're tough as heck. They watch everything. They dot every i and they cross every t in the building application." You can go to registered code agency B, and they're not so bad. But if you go to this other one, they're just really easy to get along with. They're not going to get caught up in all these technical things and they're just going to let you go through this process speedily.

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What's that going to do is lessen, I think, an onus to make sure that buildings that are built are followed to code. Why is that important? We have put those codes in place for a very good reason. You would know, Mr Speaker, as a former Solicitor General, that often building codes are developed out of coroners' inquests.

Let's say there's some sort of a disaster, like a fire in a building, and they go through the building after the fire and they do an inspection. They find out, "Oh, my God, this building burned down because of this particular system" that may not be a really good one and not properly installed or something that was put together and wasn't quite done right, and the building caught fire. Often what ended up happening was the coroner's inquest would catch that and then make recommendations to the province to make some sort of code to make building safer in the future so you don't have that same type of accident happen again. That's the reason we've put in place all these codes.

I say to the government across the way, you may see a code and you may see bylaws and regulations in building as an impediment to development, but you have to remember where they came from. They came from the disasters of the past. We said, "That didn't work; that was dangerous." There was a fire or there was a collapse or there was something that was unsafe for the public and far too often people died. They made up a code eventually out of the inquiry in order for it to not happen again. It's like learning out of one's mistakes.

Let me give you an example of somewhere where there's no code. I've travelled to many parts around the world. I've been to Asia, I've been to Africa, Europe, a number of different places, always fascinated to travel around the world. One of the places that I've always recommended my good friend the government House leader go to is Thailand. I visited Thailand about four or five years ago for about a month. Building codes there are almost non-existent. It's an everyday occurrence almost, and it really struck me, to pick up the Bangkok Times and find buildings that had collapsed. I thought,

boy, that is really strange. You pick up the paper and they'd have some picture of a building that collapsed somewhere. You would see that, oh, two, three times a week, every time you'd pick up the paper in Thailand. Finally, I started asking people questions: "What the heck is that all about? How come all these buildings are always collapsing?" What they said was that although there are some regulations and codes that are in place, the reality is that the graft within the system or the payola, as they would call it, made it such that many contractors cut corners and never followed the codes that were established in order to make those buildings safe, and that in fact, they were never inspected at all. They would basically get a building inspector, slip a couple of bucks underneath the table, and voilà, presto, here's your permit, and nobody ever came back and checked with you again. As a result, many buildings collapsed. Why did they collapse? The type of ground they were on, especially along the klongs that make up a good part of around Bangkok, is basically a swamp. That's the only way to explain it. What would happen is the way they would construct the buildings was such that there tended to be a fair amount of collapsing. So what ended up happening in that case is that people didn't follow code and unfortunately in the long run it ended up becoming a huge problem for the community of Thailand generally.

We have learned in Ontario, as have many other places around Europe and North America, that you need to have a system of regulation to make sure that building codes are built on the mistakes of the past so that if there was something that was unsafe as far as a construction method, we don't repeat that. If the code says water is to be installed a certain way or building of trusses or floor joists or whatever it might be are done in a certain way, it's based on some good engineering and also based on the things that we've learned in the past. That's what's inside most of this code.

I just say, yes, to many people there's a tendency to believe that code is a bad thing, that somehow or other it gets in the way of development. I understand that. I worked in the construction industry and ran jobs on a number of occasions and been frustrated myself. I can understand where people are coming from, but there's a good reason why most of that stuff is there.

I remember a particular job where a building inspector came into a motel unit that we were building and didn't approve an entire layout, groundwork in regard to plumbing that was done in the basement. I remember the contractor being very upset with the city of Timmins, prepared to do whatever they could to get at the inspector, because they felt the inspector was high-handed. But once you went back and really took a look—I was not a plumber, so I don't pretend to understand that stuff in detail, but a few of the journeymen who explained to me said, "Hey, there are good reasons why this is being turned down, because if this job went ahead the way that it is, the future owner would have problems with this for sure, five or 10 years down the road. The building inspector is doing this for a reason."

Now, was the general contractor mad? Of course he was, because it meant all that time and some of the material they put in the ground for two or three days had to be changed, had to be lifted, had to be redone, and it cost the general contractor more money. No question, the general contractor was really, really mad. But the journeyman that I talked to—and I tend to believe most journeymen are there because they know what they're doing—said, "You know, we told the general this was not a good idea. In fact, the general contractor should have done what we told him to."

So that is an example of where building codes are for the benefit and the protection of the public. And yes, building inspection departments in municipalities are there to police—I repeat, police—what happens in the construction industry in order to make sure you don't have shoddy work being done that future owners end up being saddled with. In that particular case, if this would have been allowed to go on, the future owner could have been faced with quite a large bill trying to fix something once the concrete was poured over it. So I say there's a good reason why all that stuff is put in place.

In the few minutes I have left, I just want to relate this back to a similar situation we've now seen with Ontario Hydro, when the government has moved to start setting up market disciplines, as they call it, in the hydro market. You would know that the inspection of electrical work that was done by electricians used to be done by electrical inspectors through what was, at the time, Ontario Hydro, what we now call Hydro One. In the past what would happen was, the inspectors used to come in, you used to pay for your permit in the beginning, and they would come back and check your job. They were available there. If you had any questions, they would answer them and they would come and do a final inspection on your job.

In this new system we have now that operates under market disciplines, contractors are mighty upset with the government. They're saying, "We're now having to pay for permits for everything." For example, I was talking to an electrical contractor who says that when you're going in to do maintenance on a commercial building or a retail building, you now have to buy a permit from this new agency, X amount of dollars for every six receptacles that you go back and fix—six plugs, plates or fixtures—where they never had to pay before. So first of all there's a huge ability to money-grab on the part of this new agency, and the contractors are really upset because it has increased their costs. In the case of places like the city of Timmins and other municipalities, they're having to pay for these permits where they never had to pay before, and the cost of that is very expensive indeed. It's adding to the overall cost that the cities are having to pay.

But here's the worst part. You would think that at least, with all this new revenue they have through the electrical inspection department, this independent agency, in fact you would end up in a situation where maybe you can get inspections done faster. You would think that was a positive thing, because the government says the

RCAs inside this bill are going to make for quicker and better inspections. Well, what's happened with the electrical inspection agency has been quite simple: you can't get hold of an inspector when you want.

I was talking to a woman who lives north of Kapuskasing. In the middle of February the stack on the hydro pole where the wires come into the building blew down in a windstorm. Her 200-amp service was knocked off line—and she has electric heat. She called the electrician to come in and fix it that day; actually, it was in the evening. The electrician came over, did the work that had to be done, and tried to get a hydro inspector. They said, "Oh, now that we have this new system, whereas you used to be able to get an inspector out of Northern Ontario Wire out of Kapuskasing every day, now you can only get one per week." So this woman had to go without an inspection for a week, until the following week, until the hydro inspector came running through town again. Consequently, the contractor had to hook her up to a temporary generator in order to run her house in the middle of February.

Supposedly we're getting better service. I fail to see how that's better service when it costs the customer more money, costs the contractor more money, causes a huge amount of grief on the part of contractors and customers, and at the end of the day you don't even get better service. What you end up with is a system where the inspectors are available less often, and then they say, "If you opt into this program that we have at the new agency, you can self-inspect." Well, you know what I say: that could be a very dangerous thing, this self-inspection stuff.

I worked in the mining community, where we didn't have any building code and we inspected ourselves. I can tell you, there was a lot of equipment in the mining community that, quite frankly, didn't meet the rigors of the electrical safety code. I would argue that parts of our plant did, but many parts didn't, because we knew we didn't have to follow code.

I just say, there are parts of this bill that might be positive, but you're opening up a whole area under these registered code agencies that I think could be very problematic. As the member from Niagara Centre said, This is privatization by way of the front door.

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The Deputy Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions and comments.

Hon Brian Coburn (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I wouldn't want comments made by the speaker from Timmins-James Bay, and certainly comments made in the House last Thursday, to leave the wrong impression. This legislation provides choice for the municipalities in terms of the RCAs and being able to either appoint one or have the builder appoint one. But at the end of the day, all of the responsibility comes back on the municipalities.

Certainly the former speaker pointed out the advancement they have made in Timmins in being able to turn around applications in a timely fashion. A number of

municipalities do that, but there are many that don't, and don't have the capability. This provides an array of tools to help them. Whether it's a lack of resources or a lack of skills in a particular area, this provides an alternative way to provide that service to ensure that the people dealing with building permits and inspections and so on are very knowledgeable as far as the building code is concerned.

Through the consultations we had a year and a half ago—I was extensively involved in those, in the development of this bill, and we had extensive consultations with all sectors in terms of consumers, builders and building officials as well, who had comments and participated in helping us develop this bill.

It streamlines the approval process, and that of course makes it more efficient for the end user—the consumer—as well, and there are savings to be achieved there. It is something that I believe is generally supported by the industry, by municipalities and by building officials, so that they can also be recognized. For those who do good work and are very responsible and accountable, it only enhances their ability to do that in this particular industry.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I'm pleased to rise and make some comments on the speech just given by the member for Timmins-James Bay. He covered a number of issues, but one that was of particular interest to me was his comment that this building-code-related bill could have been used to advance some of the ideas that persons in the disabled community have been looking for for a long time now.

I had the opportunity to understand more fully the barriers they face when it comes to many buildings here in Ontario, indeed in my own community. I did travel with someone in a wheelchair. I pushed that lady around through buildings and found barriers of doorways, washrooms, change rooms, stairways and lack of notice of where elevators are. It was quite an experience.

Some of these items cost very little. For example, public washrooms need not have doors at the main entry; they can simply put a curved wall inside whereby one cannot see in until they go around that curved wall and enter the full washroom. However, the ones that have existing doors make it very difficult for persons in wheelchairs to enter.

Some of the buildings we went to had automatic doors. Many of the buildings we see in our communities have automatic doors for the disabled. However, we went into many buildings where the outside pair of doors or many pairs of doors had an automatic situation going for them, but when you went to the second set of doors within the foyer, they were not automatic. It makes no sense, and it looks like we need to give guidance to many of the people who put our buildings in place and build them. I think the suggestion made by the member for Timmins-James Bay was excellent.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): New Democrats are going to speak to this bill. We're going to debate it—mind you, with some sense of futility, because guess what got served on me today: a time allocation motion shutting down debate on Bill 124.

Can you believe it? Again. These guys—I'm talking about the government, of course—couldn't organize a drunk-up in a brewery. They are so panicked about their legislative agenda—they're making promises all over the place, and now they are under pressure, because they're going, "Yikes." The government is saying, "We're going to have a hard time once again fulfilling our commitment to the private sector friends out there to whom we, the government, the Conservatives, have made such elaborate and grandiose promises."

Mind you, it's not that they don't receive comfort from the opposition from time to time. It's a good thing the member from Sudbury ain't here tonight. He'd be up on his feet wanting to pass this bill, second and third readings, unanimous consent, without any further debate. The member from Sudbury does that. You know what I mean. The member from Sudbury, who calls himself a Liberal when he's up in Sudbury, has done more to advance this government's agenda than any of the government backbenchers. The member from Sudbury is so enthusiastic, there's a little puddle around his feet. That's how excited he gets about this government's legislation. He's on his feet saying, "Oh, let's get unanimous consent. Let's pass government bill A, government bill B, government bill C, second and third readings, no debate."

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: It's not going to happen tonight, because New Democrats are going to debate this bill. It's all about privatization. We resist and object to privatization and we'll be resisting this bill.

Hon Mr Stockwell: First and foremost, it isn't about privatization. It's simply about giving options to municipalities if they choose to go that route. You bellyache about "one size fits all." We're offering an alternative. If municipalities want to go that route and use private sector help as far as inspections are concerned, they can. There are a lot of municipalities that don't have the skill sets out there to provide those kinds of inspections. Rather than having to hire up and cost the taxpayers a lot of money, they'll be given the opportunity of privatizing or contracting out that service. It's not unusual. It happens all the time, in all kinds of circumstances.

Swimming pools are a good example. Many municipalities operate swimming pools and they contract out the maintenance, repair and even the lifeguarding of swimming pools because they don't have the cost components built in to do those kinds of protective needs. It isn't always the same.

Second, you say you're here to debate. The House leader for the third party may be the most irresponsible House leader I've ever seen in my life. He sits in his place, and what's his job? His job is to hold up every bill for as long as possible, even if all sides are voting in favour of it. You have a warped and distorted view of the world shared by few. It's obvious that when you have this warped and distorted view of the world shared by few, you find yourself isolated and alone on many issues. That is true. But don't make the mistake that because you're isolated and lonely on these things, the whole

world is crazy. You might want to think for a moment that the whole world may not be crazy; it might be you, and you are, because you think this role of yours is simply to oppose every single bill.

If you want to have, say, two weeks' debate on Hydro, you can't. You insist on having three, four, five days' debate on a bill everybody is voting in favour of. This is your kind of warped and distorted view of virtually everything that comes before this House. That's why you are the House leader from hell. There's no point in negotiating with you. You just want to sit here week in, week out, talking about bills that nobody really cares about. They want to get them through, and you ignore the important bills.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Timmins-James Bay now has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr Bisson: The government House leader is saying this bill is unimportant, that we should have no debate. I guess that's your point.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, I didn't say that.

Mr Bisson: You can't have it both ways. Listen, the reality is—

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: You're accusing my House leader, for whom I have nicer words than you use. I don't think he's the House leader from hell. I think you are, quite frankly, at times.

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: It's not fair. OK. You can't have it both ways. The government House leader tries to say that we're holding up bills just for the sake of holding them up and they don't need to have any debate. When was the last time we had a debate in this Legislature of any bill for more than three days? The government has time-allocated everything. There is absolutely no incentive on the part of the government to do anything to the contrary, quite frankly.

I'll just give you one example. You've got the Hydro bill coming in. You know darned well it's a bill that we New Democrats obviously are going to debate for a fairly long time. It's something we oppose, something we want to stop, so of course you're going to time-allocate the bill. We're not surprised. But don't come in here and say that somehow or other we're not agreeing to having committee time. We'd love to have all kinds of committee time. We'd love to have all kinds of debate time. But you guys aren't interested because you want to privatize.

Back to the point: registered code agencies, RCAs, quite simply are a way—

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: The government House leader says that nobody has to privatize. Well, it's going to be pretty difficult for some communities not to. With all of the downloading that goes on down to the communities, there is less and less money for municipalities to do their job, so what you've got is municipalities that at one point will have to make a cost-savings decision. If they can offload by way of downloading this, or I should say privatizing these services to the private sector, some will. All

I'm saying is, that's probably not a good thing in the end because those people are going to be beholden to the people who want the contracts, not the municipality. What that means, quite frankly, is that it could be a repeat of some of the disasters we saw in the past.

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The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'm sharing my time with the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

It's a pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 124, the building code. Just two comments regarding debate: I've heard the members of the third party speaking about not having enough debate, yet I believe that every single vote, every time we have to sit in the evenings, you have voted against it.

Mr Kormos: We're here. Where are you guys?

Ms Di Cocco: I don't understand why you vote—

Interjection.

Ms Di Cocco: But you vote against sitting in the evenings. Nonetheless, I just wanted to point that out.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Please. Order from everyone on all sides. Just a reminder to members that comments are not directed right across to another member; it's through the Chair. It will help keep tensions a little easier this evening.

Sorry for the interruption. Please continue.

Ms Di Cocco: Thank you, Speaker. A very good ruling. I did have to point that fact out, that the members of the third party have voted I don't know how many times—I haven't counted—for not sitting in the evening from 6:45 to 9:30.

The other aspect I want to point out is that sometimes it isn't necessarily the length of the debate that ensures the quality of the debate. Too often there is very lengthy debate, unfortunately, but it isn't to the issues or to the bill that is in front of us.

One of the things I did was take a look at this bill. I wanted to just put this into the record as part of the explanatory note of what exactly this bill is about. Currently the Building Code Act, 1992, and the building code are enforced by the crown. That means a public body: municipalities, counties, boards of health, planning boards and conservation authorities. They're called "principal authorities"; that's the jargon they are given in the bill. Each of them has a chief building official and inspectors who have powers and duties under the act and the building code. So if the board of health is required to inspect a building that could be questionable as to the health and safety aspect, if you want to call it that, someone from the board of health is responsible to enforce that the building meets that level of safety.

The amendments to the act also permit the building code to be enforced by new entities now which are called "registered code agencies." One of the things that concerns me about this bill is that we are now again—the Liberals oppose this bill. They oppose this bill because of two reasons. It is really a different jargon about privatiz-

ing of these important health and safety functions. I know the honourable member, the Minister of Energy, stated it's to give options. But this is not just about giving options. It is about ensuring that we're—again, it's more privatization of aspects of health and safety that in our view have to be part and parcel of what public bodies have a job to do. That's their job, to protect the health and safety of the public. While we have to ensure timely review of construction projects, public safety has to come first.

The bill also places additional burdens on the municipalities, because who ends up paying the tab for outsourcing this work? It allows the municipalities and these public entities to outsource it, and then who is going to pay for it?

Hon Mr Stockwell: We pay for it anyway.

Ms Di Cocco: Well, when the board of health has a person on staff who does the inspection, they pay for the salary of that person. They don't pay for profit for that person, and it is still public dollars that are going—

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): It's taxpayers' dollars.

Ms Di Cocco: Well, they are. They are still taxpayers' dollars that are paying for the outsourcing of the work.

There's a simplistic notion the government has that if you privatize or if you can outsource, somehow it's going to be done—they're going to do it for profit. You're still going to use public dollars, but it's going to be cheaper, it's going to be better, because it's being put into private hands. Somehow that all fits.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Then don't do it.

Ms Di Cocco: Then why do we have a bill if you say, "Just don't do it"?

Interjection.

Ms Di Cocco: I wonder about the intent of the bill. If the minister says this is just to enable these entities to privatize or to use private companies, then the question I have is, has anyone provided evidence that these entities, by doing this—that it is going to save money and protect public health and safety? Because that's the reason. Protecting of public health and safety would be the main reason that one would enact this type of legislation. If in the end, by giving these entities or these—what do we call them?—the crown, the municipalities, counties, boards of health, planning boards, conservation authorities, by giving them the option to privatize or to use private companies to do their job—all right?—if you're doing all of this—

Interjection.

Ms Di Cocco: Actually, you know, I've been asked to hurry, so I think I'll just kind of—

Interjection: Slow down.

Ms Di Cocco: —slow it down a bit here.

If you're going to do this, I would hope that the government has, again, some substantial evidence that by allowing this to happen, it's going to provide for better service, it's going to provide for more cost-effective service, and it's going to provide and ensure that public health and safety are maintained.

This is not about just picking up garbage. This is about a board of health inspecting whatever aspect of the building code is impacting on health. Again, I don't have any evidence and I haven't seen any kind of good argument to suggest it's going to make the health and safety aspect better. So I would suggest to the minister that currently, again, the municipalities and the counties and the boards of health and the planning boards and the conservation authorities enforce the code. Have all of these people decided that this is exactly what they need to make their work better? Have they come to the minister and said, "You know something? I think we would like to outsource all of this stuff so we can spend our money paying the private sector to do this job"?

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We've seen a lot of public dollars go into private hands in a way that is not transparent and in a way such that there is no accountability. I have to say that the current government is a master at allowing—well, they even allow public companies this cloak of secrecy and you hope that you don't see the light of day and therefore you're allowed to continue to do business in a way that is not acceptable with good business practices.

Anyway, I have to give my time to my member. I do so reluctantly, but the next member—

Interjection: No, no.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Take your seat. That's what happens.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): It's difficult to follow a stirring performance like that, a quality performance, someone who's laid out and articulated so clearly so many of the difficulties associate with this bill.

I need to say I've got a sense of déjà vu around this bill; or maybe déjà voodoo, I'm not sure. The government talks about options and about what's good and what's not good. Bill 124 brings back a lot of memories for me, I can tell you. It all sounds so familiar: "We got the right look in our eye"; "We're doing this for your own good."

The farm folk up my way—I was talking to a guy the other day. He said, "You know, the difficulty is I used to believe government was well-intentioned but not very well-informed, but I've discovered that they're well-informed but not necessarily well-intentioned." I think that perhaps can be said. I hope it's not true about this bill.

I've got to tell the members opposite, I'd love to be able to stand in my place and say, "Look, we're looking for something that's going to strengthen the existing regimen, something that's going to protect consumers and citizens, new models that will work better, that this Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group, BRRAG for short, has offered us their best advice." Doesn't that bring back memories?

Do you remember the Who Does What group? This government went out and recruited the very best, the brightest and the most well-informed. They met and they came up with some "new models" of how things could

work. In short, they got the very best advice they could before they proceeded to completely ignore it.

I wonder when I hear about consulting with municipal officials. There's some 90 recommendations that the BRRAG group—and Minister Coburn's work there, in an earlier incarnation, was very good. The report was very, very well done; it involved a lot of very knowledgeable people. But there are 90 recommendations that were made in the report that have been ignored. There are all kinds of things that have been included in the report, including this code agency stuff which was never specifically suggested. In fact, AMO, as I understand it, has their own list of 33 changes that they specifically thought were going to be implemented that weren't incorporated into this bill. So much for listening.

When governments listen, they not only need to listen, they need to hear what's going on in a real sense. I think that's certainly been missed here, as it was when this government dabbled in restructuring our municipality, Mr Speaker. Surely, even though we've been on different sides on some issues, you'll recall the farce of that restructuring: "We won't do anything without consulting with the people of Hamilton-Wentworth. We want a made-in-Hamilton-Wentworth solution." My goodness—

Hon Mr Stockwell: What did Agostino say?

Mr McMeekin: Well, you read some of his stuff about Flamborough in particular, I say to the honourable member opposite. I need to tell you we offered up three different solutions, all of which were set aside because this government wanted to get rid of those smaller, pesky, lower-taxing, service-oriented municipalities and replace them with a one-tier monopoly government.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Your tie.

Mr McMeekin: Thanks very much. Does that look better? Is that OK?

Why? We know why: because you wanted to off-load costs and you wanted to off-load responsibility and you wanted to off-load accountability and you wanted to continue to further your development of what I call your no-fault insurance: "Whenever anything goes wrong, it's everybody's fault but ours." That is frankly one of the real concerns that members on this side have.

My wife and I ran the original Chapters bookstore in Waterdown, Ontario, years back. We used to have a sign up that said, "Service, quality, price: choose two." Get it? Choose two. You can't have everything. But when you look at this bill in terms of service, quality and price, my real fear is that not one of those subsets has really been properly addressed.

I know some of the members on this side of the House have made comments about the code agencies specifically and the so-called change that will bring about. It wasn't that long ago that we in this House stood and debated the new Municipal Act. Do you remember that infamous memo of understanding that there would be no shift in responsibilities without consulting with municipalities?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Do you have anything to say about the bill?

Mr McMeekin: Listen to AMO, I say to the honourable member opposite. There are all kinds of concerns.

Is this in the spirit of that memo of understanding? No, it's not. It's clearly not in that spirit, and I think the members opposite know that. They know it in the sense that the tools that are needed for municipalities to do this really aren't there. They know it in the sense that the regulatory framework, the regime, is inadequate. It certainly shows in the context of fees that can be charged and the whole cost of that. There's no covering off of the recertification costs that are there and very little clear definition, I say to the honourable member opposite who was involved in the early BRRAG process, of how accountability is really handled.

When we offered up three different solutions around restructuring in Hamilton-Wentworth—the city centre plan, the Skarica plan and the three-cities model—on the off chance this government really could be taken seriously about wanting to consult and listen and, on the basis of what they heard, act, we saw what happened. All those things were set aside. All the best advice that was to be had was set aside. What did we see? We saw a major transformation in my community and frankly a destruction of so much that the people I have the privilege of serving in my several communities held to be self-evident and self-evidently precious.

The issue of transitional planning was handled as poorly as was the issue of transitional funding. We continue to this day with \$110 million of off-loading, to struggle under terribly difficult circumstances to make things happen.

We now see this kind of lack of planning and lack of transition around the Nutrient Management Act.

Hon Mr Stockwell: An excellent bill.

Mr McMeekin: Potentially an excellent piece, and if you have read the second report, as I know the minister—are you the Minister of Energy and the Minister of the Environment?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Both.

Mr McMeekin: And the House leader too. Those are three big jobs. Do you have a part-time job at Tim Hortons too?

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, at Chapters.

Mr McMeekin: OK. I always thought you were fairly well read.

But the whole transitional planning and cost process there, particularly in light of Justice O'Connor's recommendations, was simply blown out of the water the other day when we were in the general government committee. The committee made several specific recommendations that were word for word out of Justice O'Connor's report. We tried to get those integrated as best we could, with the understanding that this government was committed to implementing all the recommendations of Walkerton, part two. Well, we exposed the charade. It's easy with your crew. All those wonderful amendments that were made by the two parties on this side of the House—do you know how many passed? Not one single amendment, even though virtually all of them were

consistent with the process that Judge O'Connor had set out.

Even with the government opposite does the right thing, they so often do it so badly that it spoils the impact. Tax cuts are a classic example. There's nothing wrong with tax cuts as long as they're triggered and targeted. They ought to be targeted not at wealthy folk who don't need tax cuts, they ought to be targeted at people who can really use the relief and they ought to be triggered based on the overall state of the economy.

If you're going to do something, do it right. This bill isn't a good start.

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The Deputy Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions and comments.

Mr Kormos: I listened carefully to those comments from those participating in the debate. It's good to see the Liberals not seeking unanimous consent to have this passed at second and third reading without debate. Hopefully, the Liberals will carry on and continue to debate this, as they should, because it's bad legislation. It's about privatization.

I'm interested that the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot is going to have two minutes to respond because I want him to explain which of the Tory tax cuts the Liberals are going to roll back to restore funding to education, to health and to other public services. I want to know which of the Tory tax cuts the Liberals propose to roll back, because the fact is, at the end of the day those tax cuts were paid for on the backs of students, sick people, senior citizens—some of the poorest people in our society. That's who paid for the tax cuts. I believe that we've got to get more money, more resources, more investment back into health care. We've got to get more money, more resources, more investment back into public education. We've got to reduce tuition fees. We've got to give municipalities the resources they need to restore decaying infrastructure.

I want to know from the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot—and I know he's eager to tell me. I'm anxious with anticipation. I am trembling with excitement at the prospect of that Liberal member telling me which Tory tax cuts the Liberals are going to roll back to get those investments back into those public resources that we value.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I am pleased to have a chance just to speak for a few minutes on this bill, and many other things. I see my friend across the floor has spoken about nearly everything, tax cuts and everything else.

But I want to relate to the member who spoke, and he's right in a lot of things.

Interjection: Everything, right on.

Mr Murdoch: Well, he's not right in everything he says, but he's right in a lot of things. We do get people who go out and do reports for us. They did it and so did the NDP, and then we don't listen to them. Our problem here is we let the bureaucrats draft up the bills and then we don't have the guts to go back and say, "No, that

won't work." This happens a lot of times in this House. It's happened when I was in opposition. I've seen the other government do this. We're going to have to get some guts around this place and start to do this the way we want it done.

A lot of ministers have to listen to what he had to say over there. It did happen when we were downloading and in Who Does What? A lot of the things weren't done that we should have done, and this happens again with some of these bills, unfortunately.

I believe this bill should pass. I know there are some things and everything isn't perfect, but it's just a wakeup call maybe for some of our ministers that when they do get bills done, to listen to the people we do send out there. We do pick people, as you said, who know what's going on and they go out into the communities and find out what we want to have done and then, again, sometimes we don't listen to them, which is wrong. I agree with him on that.

But to get back to the tax cuts. We do need the tax cuts. Even though some people on the opposition don't think we need the tax cuts, they do help our economy. There are some times when they think the rich get them, but that's not true. You've got to listen to it. They're way off base when they talk about tax cuts. They were good cuts that we made in this government, and it wasn't on the backs of the poor. It helps everyone. Sure, maybe if you pay a little more, you get a little more back, but you also spend more, and that helps us in our economy.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I'd like to comment on the speeches by the members for Sarnia-Lambton and Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. I think they have articulated what our position is. We won't be supporting this legislation the way it's written, certainly.

I would like to comment a little bit on what Peter Kormos, the third party House leader, said earlier with regard to me not being in the House. Normally, we don't do that, but I think I should inform the member, Peter Kormos, that I was talking to a doctor who was explaining to me the situation of an 86-year-old senior who required long-term care and wasn't getting it. That might not be important to Peter Kormos or the NDP, but it is very, very important to Rick Bartolucci and the Liberals. They may suggest that those types of things aren't as important as coming in here and listening to the bantering back and forth, but do you know what? When push comes to shove, I'll always spend the time fighting and advocating for the constituents I represent.

But do let me clarify the record. I have only once ever suggested that there be unanimous consent for second and third reading, and that had to do with Bill 135, the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act. I stand firmly behind that. I believe the NDP was completely wrong in blocking this legislation. I think they did a disservice to those people in the north, in Sault Ste Marie, Timmins and Nickel Belt, ridings that are represented by the NDP.

I want to get back to the bill, because I believe that's important. Thank you for the latitude, Speaker. It is imperative the government make changes to this legislation.

This legislation isn't that far off from being right. But you have to bring it to committee and entertain the amendments the Liberals will be putting forth. Do you know what? If that happens, you may get support for the legislation.

Mr Prue: I listened to the comments of the members for Sarnia-Lambton and Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. Both of them had interesting things to say, although I must say that they did deviate from the actual topic from time to time to get into other areas.

But dealing specifically with this bill, they did have some fairly good comments when talking about the workers and their roles in the various building departments, health agencies, conservation authorities and the others who play such a vital role. I think that is what is being lost here: the vital role of these public employees and the dedication they have to their jobs. I commend the two speakers for at least broaching the subject, because it is, in fact, these very employees who go out to construction sites, who look at the plans, who can see the violations not only to the building code but to the various municipalities' zoning bylaws, planning acts and the fire code. This is particularly important in multi-residential developments, if and when they again take place in the province of Ontario. They are very important when they look at the conservation authorities, as are the conservation authorities' guys when the people are out there looking to make sure that people aren't building too close to the edge of the valleys or impeding the river streams.

I think what is important in all of their comments comes down to the fact that these people police the act. What is being proposed here is a privatization of those who police, and that is a very real problem I have. Even worse than the problem of privatization is the problem that people who are going to police the act will be there for the highest bidder. That is something that needs to be spoken to, and I hope when I get an opportunity to do so, Mr Speaker, that I'll be able to.

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The Deputy Speaker: One of the original two speakers has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr McMeekin: I'd like to thank all those honourable members of the House who have spoken on this bill, particularly the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who has a reputation for telling the truth, not just what people want to hear. I appreciate his wise counsel and his very candid admission that so often members on that side of the House, inadvertently perhaps and sometimes wilfully, ignore what's being recommended by good people.

The question was asked about tax issues. We've been pretty clear on that. The \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts and the tax credit for private schools are among those areas that would be handled. But as important as or maybe even more important than that, we would start anew to forge the kinds of partnerships with the feds and municipalities that are real, partnerships that don't see you running away from the table every time there is a challenge around home care and the regulations around that.

We would work together to build a more prosperous economy. No one would have remembered the Good Samaritan if he hadn't had money. There's nothing wrong with prosperity. We need to be prosperous so we can look over the shoulder and assist all those who are having a tough time. We need to be able to share one another's burdens. That's the vision of the kind of society that we want.

This is the government that went out and borrowed billions of dollars so they could finance tax cuts and ran up a huge deficit—hardly the kind of managers that I'd want to brag about.

We would love to find a way to support this bill. If we could get control back in municipal hands, handle the liability stuff and incorporate the real recommendations and real concerns, we could do that.

The Deputy Speaker: Before I call for the rotation, may I get clarification? I understand there has been some research done on the earlier ruling and we have a fresh understanding. I look to the House leader of the third party to put his position forward.

Mr Kormos: I thank the government House leader for doing as one would expect. Of course, he was simply indicating or reinforcing what the agreement was. I regret that I didn't have the transcript of Hansard available for the clerks.

It's our intention, subject to your guidance, subject to any Conservative speakers, that I speak next and then Mr Prue will be following me in the NDP lineup.

The Deputy Speaker: Now I need clarification, based on the way you've worded that. You're going to speak in rotation. Is that correct? And then you're going to defer back to the member for Beaches-East York for the balance of the leadoff, or are we going directly to the balance of the leadoff?

Mr Kormos: I'll speak in rotation, sir, and then go to Mr Prue for the balance of his leadoff, subject to any concerns that might be raised.

The Deputy Speaker: That's why I want to be clear about exactly what's on the floor. What's on the floor now, for all concerned, is that the member for Niagara Centre will speak in the normal rotation and following that, based on the Hansard from last week that we now have, the member for Beaches-East York will then rise and complete the leadoff debate of the third party, as was unanimously agreed by this House. I look to the government House leader and the official opposition to see if they concur.

Hon Mr Stockwell: We don't have speakers, but I would only suppose that they wouldn't agree to that. Why don't we just say that Mr Kormos speaks and then, in rotation, Mr Prue gets up next? How about that?

Mr Kormos: Stellar.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm in the hands of the House. I'm very flexible as to how we want to proceed here.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Then let me proceed this way. I seek unanimous consent that Mr Kormos go and then, by rotation, Mr Prue be the next speaker for the NDP. He can use his 38 minutes he has left.

The Deputy Speaker: The House leader for the third party, you're OK with that?

Mr Kormos: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: Whip for the official opposition? Thank you.

Mr Kormos, you now have the floor.

Applause.

Mr Kormos: Thank you very much. I appreciate the support from that member.

Mention has already been made of the number of cabinet ministers in the chamber tonight. Gosh, I really regret that somehow there was the misperception that I was critical of a member for not being here. I indicated I was glad a member wasn't here, because I was fearful that, were that member here, the member would seek unanimous consent for this privatization bill to pass second and third reading in one fell swoop, like he's done before.

I understand why Conservative members would want to do that. They've got a legislative agenda that they're scrambling to meet.

Mr Murdoch: Really?

Mr Kormos: I'm told that they want to have this session all wrapped up, tied up with a bow, packaged neatly, postmarked, stamped, signed, sealed and delivered before the final day of June. It's remarkable. But they've got a little bit on their plates, so they're busily counting sessional days. The New Democrats have no interest in handing over sessional days to the government. It's not our job. The Liberals think it's their job. Liberals support motions to have two sessional days in one day. That accelerates things; it speeds them up. You can't say, "We're Liberals and we oppose Bill 58, the privatization of Hydro One, but we'll do everything we can to get the bill passed as quickly as possible." That's what happens, friends, when you support motions that create two sessional days in one calendar day. Think about it. That's what happens when you say, "I'm a Liberal and I want to seek unanimous consent to pass Tory legislation and I don't even want to debate it." Well, New Democrats are debating it.

Jeez, I remember a number of evenings—don't you, colleagues?—when New Democrats had to carry the debate. Nobody else wanted to debate it. There were the Tories. I understand why they were sitting on their hands. They wanted to accelerate the legislative agenda. But the Liberals were sitting on their hands too. They wanted to accelerate the Tory legislative agenda. Yikes. I was shocked and horrified. I was struck beyond belief.

I know there's a fellow named Jean Charest. One of the interesting things about Jean Charest is that—

Hon Mr Stockwell: Who is Jean Charest?

Mr Kormos: You know who Jean Charest is. He told me about how you could be a Tory or you could be a Liberal, because the nice thing about being a Liberal is you don't always have to be a Liberal. You can go Tory one day and Liberal the next. The interesting thing is that we're seeing this—what do they call that with the computer, the morphing? Is that morphing? We see this

morphing—I hope Hansard spells that right—between the Tory caucus—not all of them, but some of the outspoken ones—and the Liberals. I look and say, “Are you a Tory or are you a Liberal? Are you a Liberal or are you a Tory?” What’s a Liberal doing seeking unanimous consent to speed up Tory legislation? What’s a Liberal doing supporting Tory motions? What’s a Liberal doing helping Tories speed up the legislative agenda? Go figure. I don’t know. I’m trying to figure it out myself. So I was pleased to see the member for Sudbury running in here saying that they, speaking for the Liberals, finally oppose a government bill. It was a long time coming, wasn’t it? But we flushed them out. We got the dogs there. We were beating the bushes. We flushed them out.

Ms Di Cocco: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we’re on Bill 124, aren’t we? It doesn’t appear that the member is speaking to this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: I’m sure he will take your comments under advisement and speak to the bill. Thank you. Please continue.

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Mr Kormos: I appreciate the direction and guidance that the Speaker has provided me with for some number of years here. I value it. I appreciate other members of this House calling upon the Speaker to give me that assistance and guidance. I know that their motives are benign. I know that they’re eager to see the debate here focused. I think the interjection on the point of order was not so much concerned that I hadn’t yet addressed section 4.2 of the bill, as I intend to, but that I had been sharing—a very new age kind of thing—my concerns about where the Liberals are coming from. I was pleased; I’m elated that the member from Sudbury stood up and opposed the government bill. By God, it’s about time, member from Sudbury, and we’re all proud of you for being in the official opposition and opposing a government bill. Now debating it—that remains to be seen. We’ll look forward to that.

One of the reasons we debate things here is so that our constituents have a chance to know why we support a particular policy or why we oppose it. Folks at home want to know. That’s one of the disadvantages the Speaker has. The Speaker is muted but for his or her authority over the chamber. I knew a Speaker from Ottawa once who used to say, when he was out talking at public events, “I’m the Speaker, because I speak for the assembly.” I thought, “OK, if you insist.”

But the Speaker sacrifices his or her opportunity to speak in the Legislature, and it’s an admirable sacrifice. But Deputy Speakers have the best of both worlds, don’t they? They get to speak, they get to interject and they get to heckle, and they get to adjudicate from the Speaker’s chair.

Now, Mr Prue, from Beaches-East York, is going to be speaking. He’s got around 38 minutes left. One of the interesting perspectives—a government backbencher, I can’t remember who it was, talked about, “This bill is all about choices for little communities.” Come on, please; give me me a break.

I took a look at section 4.2, *inter alia*, and I discovered, as I’m sure everybody has who’s read the bill, that amongst other things, beginning with 4.2—catch this, Speaker; it’s going to be interesting to you—“A prescribed person”—that means a developer, a builder, and not some Hungarian guy on Park Street who’s building a home for his wife and his kids, you know, the kind of people I’ve talked about so often, although, in theory, they could. A developer or a builder “may appoint a registered code agency to perform all of the functions....” A registered code agency is the private sector, privatized, for-profit building inspector. It ain’t the little municipalities and it ain’t the little people who are going to be hiring these RCAs—Mr Prue coined the acronym. What they are is privatized, for-profit building inspectors.

It’s going to be the big developers. They’re the ones who’ve got the cash, le fromage, the cheese. And they’re not building little bungalows down on Golden Boulevard in east Welland; they’re building the big, huge high-rises. Didn’t enough people get burned during the condominium balloon here in Toronto? Man, oh, man. It wasn’t cutting corners; it was downright skulduggery and thievery. You had underground parking garage roofs—the concrete was collapsing. Oh yeah, turn a blind eye there. In fact, those developers, you’ll recall, were the subject matter of some significant legislative debate in the late 1980s, when names were named and investigations were launched, and the Liberals got burned—remember that?—because the Liberals were in the back pockets of some of those developers.

We’re concerned about public safety here, because that’s what building inspections are all about. It’s not about whether the trim is on straight, it’s not whether the paint job on the drywall has missed a couple of spots. The building inspector concerns himself with the fundamental structure of the building. You’re talking about public safety. Pick up any newspaper and look at the international page and you’ll see places in the world that have the type of building inspection that’s being advocated by this legislation, and that’s where you literally see buildings collapsing, shopping malls collapsing, hundreds of people dead or injured, the rip-offs, the payola, the grease. This bill is an attack on the integrity of a public sector building inspection system.

There are certain things that require remaining within the public domain. Public health and safety is one of them. How many more Walkertons does this government need? It’s talking about privatizing building inspection and treating it as if it’s just another little tool in the toolbox. Mind you, there’s going to be some attractiveness and appeal to it. The member for Beaches-East York—tell me if I’m wrong, member for Beaches-East York, because you’re right behind me there—talked about the fact that there may be some attractiveness to this proposition now that there’s been significant down-loading on to municipalities and municipalities have been stripped of their cash assets as more and more has been downloaded on to municipalities by this government.

There are going to be some municipalities, just as some municipalities have contemplated the privatization—sell-off is what it is. When you're talking about public assets, privatization is nothing more than the transfer of wealth from public ownership to private ownership. That's what the sell-off of Hydro One is all about. It's about a huge transfer of wealth from public ownership by 12 million-plus Ontarians to private ownership, to what will be a very concentrated, small handful owning that huge public asset.

Privatization of public assets is all about the transfer of wealth. But it's also about putting lives at risk. Building inspection isn't about aesthetics. Building inspection isn't about convenience. Building inspection, the assurance of compliance with basic building codes, is about safety. It's about public safety. It's part and parcel of ensuring that the fire suppression system that gets installed, the transfer of water with the sprinklers, not only appears to be up there—because you look at it and say, "Yeah, there's the pipe, there are the nozzles and there are the detectors"—but that it works and that it works well enough to save lives.

I regret that the Conservatives are shutting down debate on this. At first blush, the Conservatives would have us believe this is just the most innocuous bill. I suppose for them, in terms of the history of privatization, it has become innocuous: if it moves privatize it, if it doesn't move kick it until it does and then privatize it. So one says, "What the heck. Why not privatize the building inspection process? It'll keep our developer friends happy." After all, this government's still hell-bent on privatizing Hydro One. Hydro One, remember that? Publicly owned. The public owns that, the people of Ontario. Yet the hand-picked government board of directors—Tory friends each and every one of them, not a stranger in the lot, Ms Clitheroe and friends—in charge of this publicly owned asset was in pursuit of the privatization agenda. They were the pre-privatization board; that's what they were. They saw fit to use public dollars to piece off the Tories to the tune of \$7,500 in that Dufferin-Peel by-election and the Liberals to the tune of \$5,000. Here's this hand-picked Tory board that knows who its political friends are. Seven and a half grand to the Tories, five grand to the Liberals. Once again, yikes. It's very interesting. Had it not been such an apparent Conservative win, had the Liberals not been destined to be defeated in Dufferin-Peel, I'm sure it would have been the other way around. You see, the privatization board of Hydro One was just taking care of business, making sure their political friends, whether they're the Liberals or the Tories, the Tories or the Liberals, six of one, half a dozen of the other—the morphing.

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So I feel kind of good about this debate, I say to my colleagues back here. We've forced the Liberals out of the bushes. We've got them to finally stand up and say they oppose Bill 124. The member for Sudbury came running in here: "Oh, we oppose it, we oppose it. No more unanimous consents for me today. We might even debate it."

It was funny. The other day he talked about the anglers and hunters bill, right? Bill 130? Have I got that? *Interjection.*

Mr Kormos: Bill 135, yes. Here's the member, and he wanted it to pass second and third reading, yet he opposed the time allocation motion. He stood up during the time allocation motion debate—this is the member from Sudbury—and said, "You know, Speaker, I don't believe we should be debating this bill." Remember, he said that. The member from Sudbury said, "I don't think we should be debating Bill 135, but I'm going to oppose the time allocation motion anyway."

Wow. Some consistency would be modestly gratifying and it would be a little reassuring. But consistency? Whoa, pipe dreams. Please, what are you smoking? Seeking consistency? Sorry, you ain't going to find it. It's the flip-flop. Flip. Flop.

Dalton opposes the privatization of Hydro One, but then again, he oh so clearly supported it. As a matter of fact, there's a voice clip out there floating around, a couple of them, Dalton on tape, Dalton live in stereo, quadraphonic, Dolby, tuned, saying, "Well, we, the Liberals, think privatization of Hydro One's the greatest thing since buttered popcorn." And Dalton says, "As a matter of fact, your hydro rates are going to go up because they probably should." That's what he said.

Ah, please. I'm shocked. There's the leader of the Liberal Party telling Ontarians they should be paying more for their hydro and, to boot, that he wants to see it privatized. Go figure, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The members now have up to two minutes for questions or comments.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I want to take this opportunity to express a few comments about the member from Niagara Centre's 20-minute speech. It was entertaining. He can be an entertaining speaker. But I didn't learn much about Bill 124. I would have thought that he would have been telling me all the faults and the drawbacks and the weaknesses and the potential pitfalls that might lie ahead in this bill.

It seemed to me that there were a few things that he also neglected to say. I didn't hear him say how his party supported the Liberals for two and a half years back in 1985. He seems to go on at some length about the similarity between Liberals and Conservatives, and when they have good ideas, then I'm pleased to be the same. But I didn't hear him go along about how his party was so proud and pleased to form a government in 1985 with the Liberals and those same people who apparently now are unloyal opposition because of some position that they take.

I was a little disappointed that I didn't hear those weaknesses and those drawbacks and whatever criticism there would be and suggestions. So I might look forward to that in a couple of minutes, when he gets an opportunity to make his remarks. I did miss hearing about all those corrections and positive things that should be added to or amended in Bill 124. I'll listen on.

Mr Bartolucci: I'd just like to comment on the comments made by Peter Kormos. The Liberals are still go-

ing to oppose Bill 124. It's nothing he said, certainly, because he said nothing about the bill. He chose in fact to try to attack my record with regard to supporting this government.

A clear check of the record would indicate to you that that doesn't happen very often, but it did happen with Bill 135. I have to tell you I support Bill 135. The member from Timmins-James Bay may not, the member from Sault Ste Marie may not, the member from Nickel Belt may not, but in my part of northern Ontario hunting and fishing are important.

Peter Kormos is a little angry because I sent his leader a letter on December 12 and I asked him for unanimous consent on Bill 135 because I thought it was an important piece of legislation. All of a sudden, because it was embarrassing to them because they had trouble with one of their members who doesn't support the legislation, who believed that there were flaws with the legislation at that time, there's this bandwagon effect.

The reality is that I represent the people of northern Ontario, I represent the people of Sudbury, and they're very much in support of Bill 135. So as long as the people who are watching tonight understand what Peter Kormos is trying to do, and I think people take it with a grain of salt—I'm here to debate 124. If he doesn't want to, that's fine. If he wants to talk about Bill 135, I'll be more than happy to talk about Bill 135 in Timmins and James Bay, in Nickel Belt, in Sault Ste Marie, anywhere in northern Ontario where the NDP represent them. I believe in the hunters and fishermen of northern Ontario.

Mr Bisson: I'm glad the member from Niagara raised the issue of Bill 135. That gives me the opportunity to say that yes, he was perfectly right. I remember. I was here in December when Mr Bartolucci, the member for Sudbury, sent a letter to my House leader wanting us to pass by unanimous consent, with no debate, the opportunity to push Bill 135 forward, and when we New Democrats said no, he was quite miffed at our caucus. He said, "Oh, what are you doing, not supporting anglers and hunters?" People have had an opportunity to see what this bill is all about. Number one, we have never said we don't support the bill. We did say that we felt this bill did nothing and that we had to do something in order to help anglers and hunters in northern Ontario. So we said no to unanimous consent last December and we said we wanted to have proper House time to have debate in this House, and we wanted an opportunity to bring forward amendments because we did not feel that the bill did what was purported in the title. The bill says this is about anglers and hunters, heritage hunting and fishing rights, but when you look at the bill, it says, "You have the right to hunt and fish provided you follow the law."

Mr Bartolucci, that means nothing. It means absolutely nothing. It means they'll still close down roads crossing northern Ontario. Anglers and hunters will still have the rules of MNR foisted on them. They're still going to introduce slot sizes. They'll still cancel the spring bear hunt. Yes, as a New Democrat, as a northerner, I stood up and I said no. I wanted an opportunity to bring

amendments, which I did. This government chose not to accept them and not even to have an opportunity to do amendments, but I did my job and I feel good about that.

2020

I say to the member for Sudbury, beware of supporting the government too often. One might be able to read you as maybe not being a Liberal, or being too closely associated with the Tories. I can tell you, in northern Ontario being a Tory is a very bad thing when it comes to being re-elected.

So I say that yes, as your New Democrat I'm proud of what we did on Bill 135. We will support the legislation, as we always said we would, but we wanted an opportunity to do amendments, and that is something we did.

Mr Murdoch: Maybe this gives me a chance to speak on Bill 135. I notice we've had quite a discussion about that. Maybe we didn't get enough time to debate it before, but we're certainly getting the time now. I think it's a bill that has to be put through, the sooner the better, so things like the cancellation of the spring bear hunt don't happen. That's why we need the bill.

It is a little strange to see the two northern people fighting on this one, but I'm glad to see it is supported from Sudbury. It would have been nice if it had been put through before we adjourned, I believe, at Christmastime last year. It would have been nice to see that put through. I understand that the member from James Bay and vicinity wanted to have some more amendments to it. I think the bill was good enough to be passed before Christmas. I think we should have passed it then, but so be it. It's going to get done, hopefully, in this session.

I notice the House leader for the New Democrats said we're on a crash course to get done, but that's one of the bills we'd like to see get done. I think our hunters and anglers all over the province want to see that bill get done. I think we have to strive to get that done, and I'm glad the member for Sudbury is supporting us on that.

You know something that would be nice in this House? I'd like to see the opposition support the government more often. I can remember when I sat in opposition the time I stood up and supported a bill of the government of the day, the NDP. It was a labour bill, and I remember I was the only one who did that; we had a recorded vote that time too. It was a bit lonely.

It's unfortunate, I think, that in this House the opposition always has to vote against the government. I don't think that's a good way to do it. I think you should debate all the bills, but I wish we could have some more co-operation in here in the future.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Niagara Centre has two minutes to respond.

Mr Kormos: I want to re-pledge this caucus, the New Democratic Party caucus, to that spirit of co-operation. I want to re-pledge this caucus to ensuring that bills receive thorough scrutiny. I want to pledge the New Democratic Party's caucus to ensuring that the public has a complete understanding of any bill presented here. I do that in a spirit of genuine goodwill.

I say to the member for Sudbury, I want to echo the words that my leader Howard Hampton said to him back in December. I was sitting here, Mr Hampton was beside me and Mr Bartolucci was passing by, and I heard Howard very clearly telling Mr Bartolucci, "Rick, why don't you just find your wife a nice Christmas gift, because Christmas is coming." I heard that and I say to Mr Bartolucci that in three weeks' time he'll be out of here like everyone else. He'll have time to spend with his family. He'll have time to spend with his constituents and he may reflect on the lost opportunities, the opportunities to have debated—

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to make sure the member knows that my wife is very happy with the Christmas gift I got her, in fact the Christmas gifts that I got her, and it certainly wasn't because the leader of the third party—

The Deputy Speaker: Please take your seat now.

Mr Bartolucci:—said anything, because the reality is that conversation—

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Sudbury, I'm not going to go on. That's not a point of order.

Mr Kormos: To what depths will these guys stoop to steal my time? I don't believe it.

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for further debate.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: If the official opposition does not have anyone to stand right now, we will move immediately to finishing the leadoff debate. But I see we now have a Liberal member. Please take your seat. You'll be next in rotation. Therefore, the Chair goes to the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 124, and I've had the opportunity as debate was going on this evening to review certain parts of the bill. I have had some conversations with constituents who have questions and concerns. I have spoken with municipal representatives who, while they would be of the mind that it is important to have legislation that will provide a better framework within which to work, have a lot of questions and uncertainty, and I would even suggest lack of support, for the bill in its present form.

My colleague from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot has already made reference to the fact that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has made 33 recommendations for change within Bill 124. It has already been indicated in debate this evening that time allocation has been introduced on this bill and that precludes the opportunity for this Legislature or any member of the public to participate in further debate, to propose amendments or that there would even be any committee meeting on that. I'm so very disappointed at that news because I believe the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has brought forward some recommendations that should be considered.

I have to say that the government member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has also stood in his place this evening and explained how it is that here we have a government bill and obviously members of the government believe it needs some modification, that it should be changed and amended. Yet we are not going to have that opportunity in this Legislature, nor are members of the public, who have in my opinion very valid issues with provisions within the document to bring those forward for public discussion and debate and for consideration by the government before the bill is passed into law. It's very important when we're talking about a bill that will impact functions within our communities that deal directly with the health and safety of people in our communities. This is a bill that will advance privatization within our communities. We're talking about privatization of services that consider the health and safety and well-being of people in our municipalities. That is an issue and an area that my constituents are not especially comfortable about.

We have had the opportunity since this government has come to power to witness various privatization initiatives—the privatization of Ministry of Transportation services. We've also had the opportunity to participate in hearings and understand from the auditor of the province that, (1), this initiative does not always save the taxpayers money and, (2), it doesn't always provide the best service for the taxpayers of the province. In my riding with respect to Ministry of Transportation services of clearing of highways in the wintertime, as an example, I've heard from constituents. I believe the Provincial Auditor made reference to the fact that he's not been able to see where the government can make a case that is more efficient or less expensive. In the committee I attended, in fact, the auditor very clearly indicated that it cost the provincial taxpayers more in some cases to provide these services for the Ministry of Transportation when the services were privatized.

Here we have a situation where municipalities will be given the opportunity to privatize a service, and there is certainly concern among my caucus about the impact that will have in terms of the quality of work that will now take place and if in fact a registered code agency might become recognized as one that is particularly easy to do business with.

I know the position of the government is that we need this bill so that we can expedite the building process in the province of Ontario. It's not our will on this side of the House to slow it down or to drag it out—

Mr Bartolucci: The Liberals. The NDP likes to block things.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Certainly it's the Liberal position that we don't want to make that process longer or more burdensome for people who are in that process. But we do believe it is absolutely essential for the well-being of people in our community that it is comprehensive.

Obviously we have a concern when the government brings forward a piece of legislation that is going to speed things along. I mean, we saw this at the Ministry of the Environment. The government in 1995 came in and

said, "You know, there's all kinds of red tape at the Ministry of the Environment and we're spending a lot of money on inspections that we don't think are necessary." This government, in a period of two weeks, I think it was, went in and cut staff at the Ministry of the Environment, and now the people of Ontario, certainly the people of Walkerton and I would suggest even members of the government recognize that doing things expeditiously, streamlining processes, is not always in the best interests of the public or the people we are intended to serve. I offer that example as a caution with this bill, that if we consider legislation and the government ultimately passes the legislation because it's going to streamline, it's going to expedite a process—obviously even the municipalities in this province, the association of municipalities, are not convinced that all of the provisions in this act will ensure and guarantee the safety of the people who will be affected. So for that reason Liberals are not able to support the bill.

While the intention of making the whole building code process more efficient and more effective is one that we do support, there is not the opportunity even in this Legislature for us to make all of those points. We now have notice that there will be time allocation. So the government is obviously not inclined, whatever points we raise in debate, to consider those points, points that don't always come from Liberals, you know; they come from people in our ridings, constituents who are impacted by this legislation. I would suggest that the government would do well to listen to some of these points that are made that come from the grassroots. But we don't have that opportunity now because time allocation will be invoked and that prevents any amendments to the bill as it is printed right here.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry. Take your seat. That's about the fifth time from the member for Etobicoke North. Please stop.

Sorry for the interruption. Please continue.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Thank you, Speaker.

I feel very comfortable in the position that our caucus has taken, that the Liberals have taken, in that this bill needs work. It needs much more work, and because time allocation will be invoked, that won't happen. This is an opportunity the government has. We're not prepared to support a bill that needs more work, and the people in the province deserve that attention.

Speaker, at this time I would like to move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please indicate by saying "aye."

Those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2035 to 2105.

The Deputy Speaker: Mrs Dombrowsky has moved adjournment of the House. All members in favour of that motion will please stand and remain standing until all are counted. Please be seated. All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until all are counted.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 7; the nays are 28.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mrs Dombrowsky has the floor again for the remaining time.

Hon Mr Baird: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to recognize the presence in the gallery of Matt Macdonald, also known as "The Panther," and Kiley Thompson, also known as "The Waffle."

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd just like to point out that my daughter, Lauren Jackson, is separating those two characters.

The Deputy Speaker: Neither of those is a point of order. Welcome.

You have the floor.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Because this government has given us notice that they will move time allocation on this bill, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Mrs Dombrowsky has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please indicate by saying "aye."

Those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2107 to 2137.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until all are counted. Thank you.

All those opposed to the motion will please stand and remain standing until all are counted.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 4; the nays are 32.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It now being after 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2139.

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Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
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Troisième session, 37^e législature

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(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 11 June 2002

Mardi 11 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 11 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 11 juin 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JAMAICAN RELIEF EFFORT

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): Jamaica and Jamaicans are currently facing a perilous situation. Heavy rains and thunderstorms have caused widespread flooding and landslides throughout Jamaica. The heavy downpours, which began May 22 and continue today, have uprooted people from their homes and damaged roads, power and water supplies and personal property.

The hardest hit areas are St Elizabeth, Manchester, Clarendon, St Catherine and St Thomas. Prime Minister P.J. Patterson has declared these five parishes disaster areas. Vivian Betton, the consul general for Jamaica in Toronto, has appealed to all Ontarians to assist in the relief effort. Monetary donations have been requested, as well as bedding, blankets, lanterns and candles. The Jamaican consulate has opened a bank account at the Bank of Montreal at 200 King Street West in Toronto, where deposits can be made to assist the flood victims. Furthermore, contributions can also be made at any TD Canada Trust branch.

I am pleased to report that prominent Jamaican-born Michael Lee-Chin, CEO of Hamilton-based AIC mutual fund company, has pledged to match relief donations to a maximum of C\$3 million for all donations made to the special account set up at TD Canada Trust. In addition, the consulate general is accepting donations in the form of cheques or money orders. Donations can be sent to 303 Eglinton Avenue East. I encourage all Ontarians to contact the Jamaican consulate and make their contributions.

CHILDREN'S SAFETY VILLAGE

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I rise today to tell members of the House about the Children's Safety Village in London, which recently celebrated its first year of operation. The aim of the Children's Safety Village is to reduce the current statistics of 600 children injured each month in the London area. Some 95% of these injuries are preventable through education and hands-on experience.

The Children's Safety Village of London Area consists of a main building with two classrooms and a miniature town and is built on four acres of land provided by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority. It has approximately 26 scaled-down buildings, roadways, traffic lights and signs, an operational railway crossing and a school bus. After classroom instruction by police, fire and other safety personnel, the children demonstrate their knowledge of safety through the use of electric cars, bicycles and walking around.

The key to success is having fun in a learning environment. The target market is 15,000 students each school year in the London area from grade 1 to grade 4. They are taught pedestrian, bike, fire, rail and personal safety, stranger danger, and electrical and other household hazards.

The Children's Safety Village mission statement is, "Tell me and I will forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand." We cannot afford to overlook the significance of a comprehensive safety education that will ensure the well-being of our children.

I know that all members will join with me in wishing many more years of success to the Children's Safety Village of London Area and to congratulate the board of directors, board chair Andrew Murray, executive director Bill Brock, volunteers and the support staff for the important work they do.

JUVENILE DIABETES

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My statement today is to the Minister of Health. As I'm sure you know, diabetes is the leading cause of blindness, amputation, kidney failure and heart disease in Ontario. We have a treatment for it, but we do not yet have a cure.

Type 1, or juvenile diabetes, is only 10% of all cases but it causes 50% of the complications. For our young people, this is a life-altering condition. However, research has developed and proven that an insulin pump not only prevents complications with these young people but in many cases reverses it by putting a regular amount of insulin into the body that extremely closely matches what the body naturally does. Unfortunately, the cost of this pump prevents most Ontarians from having the use of it. It is approved in other countries. It costs about \$5,700 per patient to equip them with it and \$2,200 per year for supplies. But if one person has the complications from juvenile-type diabetes, it costs the health care

system over \$100,000 a year. Not only is it the right thing to do from humanity's viewpoint, it is good fiscal management to prevent these complications.

Minister of Health, I urge you to investigate immediately the feasibility and the process by which this province can provide funding for our young people, in fact for all of our citizens, who would benefit from the use of an insulin pump. It alters their life. It is a humane thing to do and is fiscally responsible. I urge the minister to act now on this.

PEEL CHILDREN'S WATER FESTIVAL

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): Last Monday and Saturday I had the privilege to join other distinguished guests to welcome children from grades 2 to 5 to the Peel Children's Water Festival and to speak to them about something we all take for granted: water. This five-day event, now in its seventh year, took place at the Heart Lake Conservation Area in my riding of Brampton Centre and in the heart of Heart Lake, which is where I live. It's an interactive educational event designed to complement the Ontario curriculum and give students hands-on learning about the importance of water in everyday life.

Over 5,000 Peel students joined up to participate in more than 50 activity centres, learn about water in the environment, water quality, distribution and conservation. On Saturday, with the assistance of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, children released a tank of trout into the Heart Lake Conservation Area to understand the value of conservation and appreciation for our fish and wildlife.

In addition to Peel students, there were a number of other schools participating. High Park Alternative School from Toronto, Donwood Park Junior Public School from Toronto and Brant Township Central Public School from Walkerton also enjoyed the festivities, as I did.

I thank all the participants who were involved and give a special thank you to all the partners that made this year's water festival a resounding success. I look forward to attending again next year.

BORDER CROSSING ISSUES

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Later this week, in Windsor and Detroit, the Michigan-Ontario summit will occur. The Premier of Ontario will represent Ontario there. My understanding is the Governor of Michigan will attend on behalf of the state of Michigan.

There are a number of pressing issues between the state and Ontario, between our great country and the United States. We reflect today as this meeting begins on the state of our border crossings, the Ambassador Bridge and a proposed third link. In its last budget, the federal government pledged \$600 million to improved border crossings, of which approximately three quarters is directed to the Windsor situation to help improve the flow of goods and services between Windsor and Detroit.

It is the largest dry port in the country, one of the largest ports in the world. It is absolutely essential that the province of Ontario come up with its share of money to improve that border crossing and to ensure that the studies that are proposed today don't take the projected 10 to 12 years.

This is probably the most significant economic and trade issue between our great nations. The federal government of the United States and the federal government of Canada are at the table; it's now time for the Premier of Ontario to put the government's money, and the people's money, where its mouth is, and that is to support a speedy resolution of the dilemma at the border crossing.

I'd also urge the Premier to discuss with the Governor of Michigan at that time the situation involving health care professionals going to and fro across the border and the need for Ontario to be able to retain and recruit new nurses in particular.

1340

HAMILTON CHINESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I rise to acknowledge an important anniversary that is taking place this weekend in Hamilton. The Hamilton Chinese Language School is proudly celebrating its 25th anniversary. For the past quarter of a century, thousands of students have attended classes at Sts Peter and Paul, and St Patrick and St Charles schools in Hamilton.

One person who has played a crucial role in the success of the school is principal Mrs Rhoda Mark, who will be honoured for 25 years of teaching excellence, leadership and dedication at her retirement party this weekend. Mrs Mark was instrumental in founding the Hamilton Chinese Language School. As principal of the school, she helped enrich the lives of many young people and has made an outstanding contribution to the community with 25 years of dedicated service. Throughout her career, she has worked to promote the importance of learning about the Chinese language, heritage and multiculturalism and what it is to be uniquely Canadian. I'm sure all members will want to join me in paying tribute to Mrs Mark and extending best wishes for her retirement, as well as best wishes for continued success to the Hamilton Chinese Language School.

BRAMPTON BLOCK PARENT PROGRAM

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): On behalf of the people of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, I'm pleased today to pay tribute to our volunteers at the Brampton Block Parent program. Block Parents are people whose homes display a red and white sign so that children know where they can get assistance if they're lost, scared or in need of help. Since 1991, Brampton Block Parents has been part of the Brampton Safe City Association. Brampton Safe City is also a recipient of funding under the Ontario government's

community policing partnership program. The Brampton Block Parents have elected a new and energetic board that is eager to make the program a success, but they're going to need community help as well. Block Parents are always looking for volunteers. Brampton Block Parents can be reached at 905-793-8132.

This fall, Brampton Block Parents will be going to many schools to inform the children about this program. I ask the folks who are watching at home, the next time you go for a walk with your kids, point out the Block Parent homes so that children know. If your block doesn't have a Block Parent, then perhaps you should volunteer to be one. Nothing takes away a child's fear more than seeing a friendly and reassuring smile. If you'd like to have more information, you can contact my office at www.ramindergill.com.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Yesterday, Maclean's magazine ranked several cities across the nation—54 of them. A big surprise—or at least, it shouldn't be to the Minister of Health—was that Windsor ranked 54th out of 54 cities for the number of doctors per capita. This should not be a surprise to anyone on the other side of the House. We have been bringing this issue forward for, at a minimum, the last seven years.

The government's answer to our woeful inadequacy of doctors: the minister decides to announce a southwest rural training centre, which may see 10 medical students coming through the Windsor area as part of their training. Let me say that even if all 10 students were to stay, we may have some remedy for family doctors in the next 15 years because this number won't even keep up with attrition—the number of retirements and doctors moving from our community.

Western University is to launch this program in the month of July. That's next month. Western University hasn't received one red cent yet to begin this program. How can we expect universities in Ontario to float these new programs on their own, considering the operating woes that our universities face? We insist that the minister come to the table to help, especially in areas like Windsor that are so woefully inadequate in the number of doctors, specialists and family doctors.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS IN BARRIE-SIMCOE-BRADFORD

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): On Saturday, June 8, I was pleased to attend and sponsor my sixth annual pancake breakfast at the Royal Canadian Legion in Barrie. The pancake breakfast has raised funds in excess of \$12,000 in support of women's cancer research, treatment and prevention at Royal Victoria Hospital. It also raises awareness of women's cancer and the excellent treatment provided by the professionals at Royal Victoria Hospital. I wish to thank all those who attended the breakfast and the proud supporters, those

being the Barrie Examiner, Shoppers Drug Mart, A&M Super Food Store, the Barrie Jazz and Blues Festival, Wagg's Linens, B101, and Papermate Business Solicitations Inc.

I also extend an invitation to my constituents to attend on Sunday, June 16, from 10 am to 2 pm at Casey's Bar and Grill on Bayfield Street, and the Barrie Jazz Festival at Heritage Park, in support of men's cancer research treatment and prevention at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Finally, my fourth annual pancake breakfast starts at 9 am on Saturday, June 22, at Holy Martyrs of Japan church in Bradford-West Gwillimbury to raise funds and awareness for women's cancer research, treatment and prevention at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, in the member's west gallery we have Mr René Fontaine, who was the member for Cochrane North in the 33rd and 34th Parliaments. Please join me in welcoming our colleague.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT (HYDRO SALARY DISCLOSURE), 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉLECTRICITÉ (DIVULGATION DES SALAIRES DANS L'INDUSTRIE DE L'ÉLECTRICITÉ)

Mr McGuinty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 85, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 by making the corporations created under it subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act / Projet de loi 85, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité en assujettissant les personnes morales créées en vertu de celle-ci à la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): Quite simply, this bill will act to protect the interests of Hydro's ratepayers by breaking down the wall of secrecy around that company and by requiring it to make available information on compensation and other matters of interest to the Ontario public.

TRUTH ABOUT IPPERWASH ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 CONCERNANT LA VÉRITÉ SUR IPPERWASH

Mr Phillips moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 87, An Act to provide for a public inquiry to discover the truth about events at Ipperwash Provincial Park leading to the death of Dudley George / Projet de loi 87, Loi prévoyant une enquête publique pour découvrir la vérité sur les événements qui se sont produits au parc provincial Ipperwash et qui ont conduit au décès de Dudley George.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): The bill's short form is called the Truth about Ipperwash Act, 2002. It requires the Premier to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that a commission be appointed to inquire into and report on the death of Dudley George and to make recommendations directed to the avoidance of violence in similar circumstances. The commission is given powers under the Public Inquiries Act. Once the inquiry begins, the commission must make an interim report in six months and a final report in 12 months.

1350

MEMBER FOR LANARK-CARLETON

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent to pay our respects to the long-serving member for Lanark-Carleton.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon Mr Eves: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thought that might be the only way I got unanimous consent.

It's a pleasure for me to rise and recognize a person and an individual who I think has been respected by all sides of this Legislature for over 25 years now. I understand a tribute was paid to our good friend Mr Bradley yesterday, but Norm Sterling was first elected to the Legislature in the same election on June 9, 1977. He has outlived three different name changes in his riding to date—I say "to date"—with Carleton-Grenville, Carleton and, of course, now Lanark-Carleton. It doesn't seem to make any difference what the riding is called or what it's boundaries are, but Norm seems to earn the respect of the people he represents. Abraham Lincoln once said, "You don't have to fool all the people all the time, you just have to fool the majority of them." I guess Norm has done that very well.

He's the longest-sitting member of the PC caucus, having been re-elected for a seventh time in 1999, which would make him the dean of our caucus. Of course, as honourable members know, he currently serves as Ontario's Minister of Transportation.

Prior to this, Norm has held many different portfolios. He certainly has had a well-rounded experience in this place. I don't know what that says. Either he solves the problems at all the ministries he's at or we move him on to another one. He has been the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, Minister of Intergovernmental

Affairs, government House leader, Minister of the Environment and Energy and Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

In his first term, he served as parliamentary assistant to the then-Attorney General Roy McMurtry. It was there that I first met Norm Sterling on my arrival at Queen's Park in 1981. I was a very lowly backbencher sitting way back there in the fourth row. Norm took pity on me, I guess, and invited me to an Attorney General's conference in Vancouver. Of course we had—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: Before they go too far over there, James Breithaupt, the good Liberal member from Kitchener of course, and James Renwick were also in attendance, as I recall, and contributed greatly to the conference, I might add.

Norm, of course, very shortly thereafter became a minister without portfolio and then became Provincial Secretary for Resources Development with primary responsibility for native affairs in the Niagara Escarpment. It was under those auspices, I guess, that I really got to know Norm fairly well because I was asked to take over his portfolio in 1985. You might expect an individual whom you were replacing to be somewhat bitter about the experience, but I will never forget how gracious and helpful Norm Sterling was to me as he took me through the different problems and concerns with respect to that particular ministry. He always put the peoples' interests first and put other interests, including his own, aside. That told me a lot about Norm Sterling as an individual.

Norm has also served in this House as PC deputy House leader; chair of the PC caucus; PC critic for intergovernmental affairs; for treasury and economics; for industry, trade and technology; and for consumer and commercial relations.

Norm has several degrees, which may come as some surprise to those members of the House opposite. He received a bachelor of engineering, a civil engineering degree from Carleton University in 1964 and a law degree from the University of Ottawa in 1969. He was called to the bar in 1971. Some would say that Norm is educated beyond his intelligence, but I wouldn't say that.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): He's your friend, Norm. Wait till it gets to this side.

Hon Mr Eves: I just thought I'd prepare Norm for the comments that might follow from the opposite side of the House.

Prior to entering politics, Norm worked as a civil engineer. He owned and operated a small manufacturing firm and he practised law for six years.

Norm has always had a bit of a flair for the unusual. You just never know what's going to come out of Norm next, so to speak. In 1992, he introduced a private member's bill called the Drop the Penny Act to abolish the penny. I can remember the great fanfare and commitment with which Norm stormed through the Legislature and talked many, many a time about the logic of this great initiative.

He also introduced a resolution in 1992—that must have been a particularly difficult year for Norm—stating that the Senate of Canada should be abolished. Of course, others have followed him in that regard many times over. Obviously, Norm doesn't have any aspirations to get appointed to the Senate of Canada, and if he ever did, they're gone now.

Norm also was very influential in supporting the Corel Centre, the home of the Ottawa Senators, and bringing forward freedom of information legislation and legislation prohibiting smoking in the workplace and initiating the Drive Clean program in the province of Ontario.

In 1996, while Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Norm had another particular little quirk when he amended the Liquor Control Act of Ontario to allow drinking on the golf course. I can still remember all of the interesting fallout that came from that.

Norm is a huge golf fan. You'll notice I didn't say, "A huge golfer." He's a huge golf fan. He relishes the game and the challenge that it brings, and certainly enjoys the odd toddy afterwards. He loves the Ottawa Senators and he enjoys a good glass of scotch. Of course, anyone who loves the Ottawa Senators should enjoy scotch quite a bit because they get a chance to indulge quite a bit.

While in opposition, the Conservative filibuster to read out every single lake and stream into the Legislature Norm claims was his suggestion, not Mike Harris's. That might be news to Mike, but it probably was Norm's suggestion, knowing Norm's penchant for such unusual ideas and solutions to problems.

On a personal note, Norm has been together with Joan Stearns for 12 years and they've been married for the last two. They have four adult children: Sara, Ian, Jarrod and John. His passion in life is the three grandchildren: Madeline, Brayden and Tierney. Norm even claims to have owned a few racehorses to pay his way through law school, although I've been to the racetrack with Norm and I doubt that could ever possibly be the case. But he certainly enjoys telling the stories and relishes an evening or a day at the track.

Norm and Joan took up ballroom dancing together, and they stunned the guests at their wedding when they danced the tango. Now, Norm's been known to dance around a few issues at Queen's Park, but that was a sight to behold indeed.

It's kind of ironic that what goes around often comes around in life. When Norm was first out of school and looking for a job as an engineer, he was offered a job with the Ministry of Transportation, but turned it down because the pay was inadequate. Today, the pay's still inadequate, but he stands as the Minister of Transportation in the province of Ontario.

Congratulations, Norm; another 25 years to you.

Applause.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Yesterday, Norm Sterling had the chance to say a few words about me, and he was very kind, I must say. Today, on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus, and I'm sure

on behalf of many people of Ontario, I have the pleasure of saying a few things about Norm Sterling.

The first thing I would say is that Norm is a very good friend of mine, as a member of this Legislature, and has been since he was elected in 1977. I'm very proud to count him among people whom I would call close friends, and it is a result of both of us serving in this Legislature. I've had a good deal of respect for Norm's views on issues. A lot of people, perhaps, if they don't follow the Legislature closely or an individual's career, wouldn't recognize that Norm is a very independent-minded person. Those in the caucus would know it and those who served in cabinet would know it. Norm isn't afraid to express his point of view. That has been shown on a number of occasions, when he has even voted the opposite way to his party and spoken out on a number of issues.

What is an enemy, sometimes, of those of us who serve in the Legislature is something called Hansard, because it's there forever and one can read back some of the comments, which at the time seem to be very wise aren't always a little later. But for Norm they are.

1400

One thing I've always relied upon in the Conservative government is that Norm Sterling would be speaking on behalf of the Niagara Escarpment Commission. That's because when he was the provincial secretary for resources development he was responsible for overseeing the development of the Niagara Escarpment plan. So when issues come up that are contentious, as they do from time to time in cabinet and in caucus and in the realm of public policy, I as a strong defender of the Niagara Escarpment Commission have always been able to rely upon my friend Norm Sterling to speak out on behalf of the preservation of the escarpment. I think the people of this province should know that. Certainly people who are close to Norm would know that.

Second is the issue of freedom of information, which is topical at all times; it's topical in this House today. There was a bill introduced in the federal House at this time; they're talking about freedom of information. When Norm was the parliamentary assistant to Roy McMurtry, the Attorney General, he was responsible for developing a plan to implement freedom of information. My suspicion would be, although one has to be careful when speaking about a Chief Justice in Ontario, that Norm was more radical on the issue than perhaps Minister McMurtry might have been at the time and he actually fought for a very meaningful program and policy and bill which would bring into action freedom of information in government.

He was also ahead of his time in his smoking legislation; that is, in terms of anti-smoking. Today it is almost accepted in many quarters that public buildings are completely free of smoke. Norm brought forward his resolution when it wasn't quite so popular to do so, and he was somewhat in a minority. Today people have come around to his point of view, and he of course was right in advancing that particular legislation or that resolution.

In addition to that, he has talked about the role of the individual MPP. I'm quoting from an Eric Dowd column. What would we do without Eric Dowd, the dean of the press gallery, who has even more newspapers and clippings than I have in my office? It is said, and I'll be very careful because I don't want to cause any problems—but Norm Sterling, a former minister, called his Premier's lack of regard for elected members "disgraceful and a charade." He was talking about a Premier; he wasn't talking about the present Premier. I want to assure you of that. This was a number of years ago. It was because he recognized, as he always has in this House, the importance of the role of the individual member and has some strong views of what that role should be. He was a good House leader, when he was the House leader, for that reason and was tough to deal with in negotiations as a House leader but very fair. The one thing you always liked about Norm was that when he gave his word on a House leaders' agreement, you knew that his word was as good as gold in that case.

I should tell you, though, that he had this to say about party leaders and so on. He said in Hansard in 1987, "My answer to the question of who rules is that it is neither the members of this Legislature nor the critics. It is the Premier of the province who rules and rules alone, and the leaders of the party to a minor degree." So he observed something that others across Canada are observing today.

He said, "I suggest that it is necessary to change not only the written rules but also the chemistry of what happens between each and every one in this Legislature, including my relationship with my leader, my relationship with the Premier and the relationships of government members with the Premier.

"I am going to suggest some very radical things that I would like to see changed as well," supporting the member for Humber in this particular case. He said, "I would like to remove the Premier's absolute control over the financial well-being of every member of this Legislature. I believe that every member of this Legislature, whether he is a cabinet minister, a parliamentary assistant, the head of a committee or a member of the opposition, should be paid the exact same dollars. Therefore, people seeking to become cabinet ministers, seeking a higher position in their party, seeking to become leader of their party would seek those positions on a matter of principle alone and they would not feel financially compelled to stay in a position if they differed with a policy of the Premier or of the leader of the party." How do you like that?

So, needless to say—and I'm not trying to get you into trouble, Norm—he had some very popular views. He didn't suggest that other salaries be lowered. He suggested, I think, that all salaries be lifted.

Read the biography. Biographies are pretty dry, but the Premier has mentioned an exceptional background: business background, law background—an engineer and a lawyer at the same time. Norm has an excellent back-

ground to come to this Legislature and contribute to public life.

As I mentioned, as a House leader you couldn't ask for better, although the present House leader is certainly trying to reach the level of his Housemate there—this House of course.

I want to say as well that Norm was kind enough, without any prompting—just one request to him—to come down to a dinner in St Catharines where I was being feted, I guess is the word you say, for 25 years in the Legislature. But Norm's the kind of—

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Feted.

Mr Bradley: "Feted" is the word? We were feted, you know. I'm glad you mention that. I'm glad we have that former Speaker in the House to tell us that.

The point is, it took no prompting for Norm. He so willingly came down. We know the busy schedule that cabinet ministers have, and I was pleased to see that.

The beer on the golf course is appreciated by many. I, of course, have been corresponding with the temperance union in Ontario, indicating that I'm not entirely in support of what he has suggested, but there are many people in my constituency who thought that was what we would call a "progressive" move.

He has, as well, an excellent sense of humour. In this job you have to have a sense of humour. At one moment, we can be angry with one another or angry at a situation, but Norm Sterling always has that sense of humour which can defuse a very tense situation, and that's what we need in this House.

I appreciate that he's a person who doesn't jump on the bandwagon of the Toronto Maple Leafs, for instance. I know it was popular to do so in Toronto, waving the flags and so on. But even when the Premier went to St Catharines and said, "Anybody who cheers for the Senators is a loser," I stood up in this House and defended Norm Sterling for indicating he was prepared to stick with the Ottawa Senators.

The last thing he is well known for is wanting to abolish the penny. I can't think of anybody in this province outside of those who make pennies who would want to see those pennies remain.

Norm, it's been a pleasure sitting with you. I know you're not about to retire. What happened yesterday—somebody phoned my office after what he referred to as a "eulogy" in the House for some reason and said, "I hear you're retiring." I had to correct him, of course, because you indicated, when you said there was still fire in the belly for you and for me, that neither one of us would be retiring. I'm happy to hear you are going to continue on. Needless to say, we will have a very strong Liberal candidate in your riding who will once again try to unseat the "squire of Manotick," as you used to be referred to by my colleague Sean Conway.

We wish you well. You've been a good representative for your constituents. You've been an excellent person in opposition and recognized the importance of the opposition. You've been an outstanding cabinet minister with a

breadth of experience and a lot of empathy for the people of this province. We thank you for that service, and we all wish you well for many years to come.

Applause.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): The competition was fierce among this cabinet—or this caucus; how interesting—among the nine of us as to who was going to participate in this tribute to Mr Sterling on the occasion of 25 years. We resolved this unusual conflict among these nine caucus members by determining that we'd assess the references to Norm Sterling and perhaps the caucus member who was most like him would have the opportunity to stand and pay tribute to him.

The 1987 headlines in the Ottawa Citizen: “Norm Sterling: A Touch of Rebellion Under Quiet Exterior.” I concede the quiet exterior to Mr Sterling. In 1985, a Globe and Mail article wherein “Mr Sterling Announces That He Will Indeed Vote Against His Government.” In 1994: “MPP Sterling Under Fire for Stalling Bill.” In 1985, a headline: “Frank Miller Will Not Discipline Renegade Conservative Norm Sterling.”

1410

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): What paper is that?

Mr Kormos: That indeed was the Globe and Mail again.

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: No, no, you misunderstand. Mr Sterling was not disciplined.

Look, 25 years in this Legislature is, in and of itself, a tremendous career. It's two and a half decades of commitment to one's own community, one's constituency, one's riding, one's constituents, and it's 25 years of commitment to this assembly.

I was first here, of course, with Mr Sterling after he had been in government and in positions of power within government. He was serving here in opposition, as was I. He was here and I was blessed and fortunate to become a member of this Legislative Assembly when the rapport among members of the assembly—as Jim Bradley indicates, while there was debate as acrimonious as any and as partisan as any, the rapport was such that once that debate ended, and I mean once the Speaker rose and announced the adjournment of the Legislature to the next day, there was an opportunity and there were frequent occasions wherein members would associate, would socialize, would indeed develop and pursue agendas together with what has been spoken of so often, that level of collegiality that is increasingly absent from the chamber. As well, senior members of the assembly—and don't forget, by the time I got here, Mr Sterling had already been here for beyond a decade—regardless of the partisan differences, gave their support and counsel to new and junior members of the assembly, and once again, without regard for the partisanship that inevitably occupied and preoccupied the debate.

Politics is in many respects so tough on families, and in this regard I'm pleased that the Premier made mention of Mr Sterling's family because the support that families give their spouses or their parents who are members of

the assembly is essential to that member being able to pursue his or her goals and professional and political career here. As a lawyer, as has been noted, as an engineer, as a small business person, Norm Sterling has clearly, with a strong professional background, been someone who has attracted and maintained the support of his constituents.

I also note, though, the newspaper reference to what must have been an incredibly challenging occasion for Norm when, in 1987, he had to acknowledge that for the first time he had to rely on his personality rather than his party in his pursuit of his seat and his re-election here at Queen's Park. I've had occasion, not so much in the recent past but in that distant past when Mr Sterling was a member of the opposition and I was a member of the opposition, to travel, for instance, to the Ottawa airport. Mr Sterling, once again, as I told you, in that model of the senior member who's so instructive to junior members, was most helpful to me in explaining how, notwithstanding one's reservation in the economy seats, if one delayed one's attendance at the desk where the flight was being announced and tickets were being taken, and did it with precision, one could, as Mr Sterling demonstrated with remarkable agility, find oneself in first class, notwithstanding the economy-tourist class ticket.

He also introduced me to—I had no idea; I had never been in and, quite frankly, haven't been in one since—the exclusive lounge that frequent flyers get at airports by virtue of the Air Canada points and the accumulation of those sorts of things. I tell you that he introduced me to that dark, mysterious, wonderful, affluent world of the private lounge for the frequent traveller. I've never been in one since. I'm grateful for his having taken me on that brief but remarkable journey, and I'm going to remember it for the rest of my life.

New Democrats here congratulate Norm Sterling on his service to his constituents, to his community and to this Legislature. He has been a formidable force within the Progressive Conservative Party. He certainly has performed roles of leadership, and continues to do that. We congratulate him, we applaud him and we wish him well in future years.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): Thanks to Mr Eves, Mr Kormos and Mr Bradley for their kind remarks. Of course, I would not have been as successful in politics and I think as successful in getting re-elected had I not had the help of so many people, but I think also in terms of doing a lot of good things, not only on a big scale but on a small scale, for a lot of the people I represent.

I cannot forget coming here near the first day when one of my seatmates was a fellow named Bruce McCaffrey, who was a member here until 1987. With him came a very important person to our caucus for a long period of time, Barbara Colantonio, who is also celebrating her 25th anniversary here.

Applause.

Hon Mr Sterling: I think everybody in Hansard should know that that was a standing ovation for Barbara.

There could probably be no better politician or political adviser than my wife, Joanie, who is sitting with us today in the members' gallery. Joan has been a tremendous strength to me, and she's a hell of a lot better looking than I am too.

Interjections: Hear, hear.

Hon Mr Sterling: Let's not go too far here.

When a member gets to sit in this place for 25 years and experience 12 years sitting on the executive council and cabinet, you do have a perspective of government, you have a perspective of how things are done and you have a perspective of what's happening back in your area. I have been extremely privileged to be supported by a whole number of people in eastern Ontario. I've always considered that my home, and I've really been very appreciative of their support over that period of time.

When you have that 25-year perspective, you can trace some of the things you did back in your early career to benefits that occurred in the later part of your career. I think one of my greatest achievements, which Mr Eves did not mention, was the building of Highway 416, which would not have happened had I not resurrected it early in 1982 or 1983, when everybody else had forgotten it, and pushed for the environmental assessment hearing to go ahead. Eventually the government was in a position to finish that in 1999.

I was here when the city of Kanata was created, way back in 1978. In fact, as a young backbencher, I asked the then Premier, Premier Davis, a surprise question about the fact that he was going to dump the Mayo report and the city of Kanata was not going to be created. I have seen that city being created and now becoming part of the city of Ottawa. So you get a different perspective about things when you have been here as long as Jim and I have, and I believe it's valuable to the other members of the Legislature to draw on that experience from time to time.

1420

I have been a very, very strong defender of this institution, this institution and the other institutions we rely on in our courts. I, like Jim, have never had to leave this chamber because of something I've said, because I have never considered it an honour, nor have I ever clapped for anybody who has been expelled from this place, because I believe that the defending of the institution is far more important than the issue of the day.

I will say this about the two institutions that I'm most closely allied with and have the greatest interest in, and those are the courts and this place, the Legislative Assembly. I'm worried about both of them going into the future. Quite frankly, I'm confused as to how to fix both. While being a strong supporter of the Charter of Rights, I do believe the judiciary is taking, at this point in time, far too active a role in what former politicians decided in this place and in our House of Commons. I do hope, going into the future, that will be corrected. I don't know how to correct it, but I do sense that that is one institution, which I have defended very strongly, which has to be brought back in line.

As far as this place, I have tried, as the House leader, deputy House leader, both in opposition and in this place as the government House leader, to bring change to the rules to allow this place to be more meaningful not only for the executive council but for the other members of the parties here, because I believe they're here not only to criticize but also to be constructive while they are here.

Back in 1987, when we were in a minority situation, I was able to negotiate the ability for members of the opposition to bring forward for discussion certain topics in committee. Unfortunately, that was used by the opposition over a period of time for partisan purposes and was not used for what I had envisaged in my own mind in terms of really giving opposition members the opportunity to bring forward topics that were of interest to them and would lead to greater study and then would lead to law.

As the House leader here, I brought forward the opportunity for members of a committee to bring forward committee bills in two of our committees. Unfortunately, that has not been used nearly enough, as far as I'm concerned, and I encourage members to use that tool.

I brought forward the opportunity to send bills out after first reading, and we have done that on a number of occasions. I know when Mr Clark was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health he brought forward Brian's Law, and that worked out very well.

I think we have to look at this institution and, in the future, try to be more innovative, to make this place more meaningful, to make the debate more pointed, or the public will continue to hold us in the low esteem that some of them do at the present time.

I'm sorry to go on in a philosophical tone at a time of celebration. I left two professions to come to this profession. I believe being a politician is an honourable profession. I think it is one of the most exciting jobs a person could have and I think it's one of the most rewarding jobs a person can have, because you can do things for people. In a very small sense, my greatest 25th anniversary present was to be able to bring to a small community that I represent a new high school for that community. I will continue to be thrilled by—not changing laws in the big sense; that is important, but it's also important to do things back home for our kids and for the people in our communities.

I look forward to the challenges of the future, and for those of you who might be interested in whether I'm going to run the next time, I'm going to continue to run until we bring the pensions back.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question today is for the Premier. Our public schools are in trouble: classes are too large; textbooks too few;

school closures too many; there are 39,000 children on a waiting list for their first psychological assessment; and the failure rate, we have learned, for students under the new curriculum is twice what it was under the old curriculum. Our schools and our students need your help. In the face of all this, Premier, can you tell us why you remain committed to spending half a billion dollars in private schools?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): To the leader of the official opposition, first of all, he throws numbers around, he grasps them out of thin air and states them as fact on many occasions. We recently, as he will be well aware, have committed some \$440 million in this fiscal year alone in additional funding to the education system in Ontario. We firmly believe in the public education system in Ontario. The Minister of Education has asked Dr Rozanski to come back with recommendations later this year with respect to the funding formula to protect and improve the public education system in Ontario, and we will remain firmly committed to that goal.

Mr McGuinty: I can understand why the Premier didn't address the issue of private school tax credits, because it's very difficult to defend the indefensible. It is very difficult to defend something which you yourself, sir, called ludicrous.

This year you are spending \$100 million on your private school tax credit. Next year it'll be \$200 million. When it is fully phased in it'll be \$500 million. We are short today in Ontario, Premier, English-as-a-second-language teachers, librarians, principals, psychologists, speech pathologists, special-ed assistants, phys ed teachers, music teachers, and security measures like surveillance cameras which would better protect our students.

I ask you again, Premier, in the face of all these needs within our public school system, how can you possibly justify spending one cent in private schools?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, we happen to believe that choice in education is a good thing. Parents have a right to send—

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): At the expense of the public system.

Hon Mr Eves: No, not at the expense of the public system. It is not at the expense of the public system, with all due respect to the honourable member for Kingston.

With respect to the public education system, as I said in my first response, we are spending well in excess of \$14 billion on public education in the province of Ontario this year. We have committed close to half a billion dollars in additional funding in this fiscal year alone and asked for a review of the funding formula so we can further improve upon it.

Going back to the issue with respect to choice in the education system, we happen to believe that choice is a good thing. It doesn't have to take away from the public education system. It won't take away from the public education system, and it isn't going to cost anywhere near as much as the leader of the official opposition would have one believe.

Mr McGuinty: You said it was ludicrous. If you have whatever you call it, whether it's \$300 million or \$500 million, for private schools in Ontario, I say that's coming at the expense of money that should be invested in public education.

Speaking of expense, it is parents who are shouldering this burden. Parents are paying out of pocket to try to shore up public education. Last year, parents raised \$38 million for things like basic classroom supplies and they're doing that because you won't provide those supplies, Premier. Private tutoring is a booming business in Ontario because students are not getting the help they need in their schools and you, sir, are not providing that help to our students.

My priority is public education and public schools. We put forward a variety of plans, Premier: Helping Kids Now, smaller classes, better safety measures in our schools. Why won't you stand up for public education? Why won't you renounce that investment in private schools and, instead, help shore up public education?

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Hon Mr Eves: First of all, I note that he's reduced his own calculation of the education tax credit from \$500 million to \$300 million in 10 minutes. If we stand here for another 10 minutes, it'll be down to \$100 million, no doubt.

We are absolutely committed to a quality public education system in this province. We've proved it by spending half a billion dollars more this year than we did last year on public education, and we will continue to prove it and demonstrate it as we go forward with a review of the funding formula and no doubt come forward with further improvements to the public education system in the province.

With respect to private tutoring etc, I had a son who was in the public education system whom we helped to get private tutoring because he had a learning disability. It's why I made special education a commitment of mine when I was Minister of Finance. It's why we're now spending \$1.4 billion a year on special education that has to be spent there, which your government never did when you were in power.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Yesterday I asked your Minister of Energy if he would support a bill, which I introduced today, that would require that Ontario Hydro be subject to the provisions of the freedom of information legislation. He said that he would not do so. He said that it would put that company, Hydro One in particular, at a competitive disadvantage. That is nonsense, sir, and if you take a look at the freedom of information act, you will find out why it is nonsense.

Will you support the bill that I introduced today?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Well, I haven't read the bill the honourable member introduced today. But I will say that

if you want, and I note that you have been on record as saying that you're in favour of Hydro One operating as a private company, as a Business Corporations Act entity, then you can't have two different levels of corporations under the Business Corporations Act in the province of Ontario. You're either going to act as a corporation of the Business Corporations Act of Ontario or you're not. So if you're going to try to set up some sort of special status for one company out of the tens of thousands in Ontario under the Business Corporations Act, I would not be in favour of that.

Mr McGuinty: The issue here is not as you framed it. The issue is whether or not you feel that ratepayers are entitled to have access to that information. That's the issue. By the way, Premier, section 18 of the freedom of information act reads as follows: "A head may refuse to disclose a record that contains ...

"(c) information where the disclosure could reasonably be expected to prejudice the economic interests of an institution or the competitive position of an institution."

The freedom of information act specifically provides for an exemption if to provide that information would put the company at a competitive disadvantage. So I ask you again, sir, why will you not support my bill which would ensure that Ontario Hydro ratepayers have access to important information?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member surely knows that Hydro One releases annual public filings and quarterly financial reports. He also knows that today an interim board of Hydro One was appointed. They are to report back to the government on issues of corporate governance and how to make that corporation operate more smoothly and in fact get information more quickly to the shareholders, who happen to be the people of the province of Ontario.

Mr McGuinty: If you want to put some important information on the record, Premier, this is what Ontarians should know. Before you imposed a blackout on information coming from Hydro One, this is what we learned. Paul Rhodes received \$225,000 after an untendered contract paid him \$2,000 a day. Tom Long's company was paid \$650 an hour to write speeches and US\$250,000 to do executive recruitment. Leslie Noble's contract paid her \$7,000 a month. We don't know what Deb Hutton is now making, and we feel Ontario ratepayers are entitled to that information. I believe the real reason has nothing to do with putting Ontario Hydro at a competitive disadvantage; it has everything to do with covering up contracts and perks awarded to your friends.

Premier, you can show me to be wrong. Prove me wrong and make this company, Hydro One, subject to freedom of information legislation.

Hon Mr Eves: I think the leader of the official opposition has been following the goings-on of the House of Commons in Ottawa a little bit too closely lately. With respect to Hydro One, we have put in place a decent board of directors as an interim board. We are asking that board, as boards should do, to report to the shareholder

on issues of corporate governance, compensation and severance—all the issues he has been complaining about in the Legislature for the last three weeks. We now have an interim board in place that will deal exactly with those issues. You might want to take those issues up with Murray Elston. I'm sure he'd be happy to hear your point of view as you go forward.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. This morning hydro rates skyrocketed to over \$700 a megawatt hour. That's 15 times higher than they were before hydro deregulation. The IMO sent us a chart which shows what happened, but you have to flip the chart up to see exactly how much the hydro rate hike is.

The Independent Market Operator says we're in for a long, hot summer. The IMO says there will be hydro shortages and these incredible hydro rate hikes are going to happen very frequently.

Premier, my question to you is, how high will your new hydro rates have to go before you admit that hydro privatization and deregulation are not good for Ontario consumers or Ontario industry?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, the leader of the third party may have a very unique plan, where he pays by the hour or day, but I don't know of any such plan in existence in Ontario. He knows very well that you take averages of the hydro rates. There have always been spikes in electricity prices. They are now there for people to see and recognize.

He will also know that if you happen to subscribe through OPG, your hydro rate of course is guaranteed and locked in at no higher than 3.8 cents a kilowatt hour. He will also know that since the market has opened, the average has been below that amount every day. If the average ever happens to be above that amount, OPG will reimburse the ratepayer for those overages.

Mr Hampton: OPG will only play that subsidization game for a couple of years. The IMO is very clear: we are facing hydro shortages, and they're saying we are going to see huge hydro rate increases.

Let me give you the example of Abitibi-Consolidated, which has five paper mills in this province. Abitibi-Consolidated has told their employees that when the price of hydro goes up, as we're seeing today, they will simply close their mills and lay off their workers. Falconbridge in Sudbury has told their workers they're going to take a seven-week shutdown this summer. Part of the reason is because they're expecting these huge hydro rate increases, so they're going to lay everybody off and send them home.

Premier, is it your idea of something good for Ontario workers and industries that factories simply shut down for six, seven or eight weeks at a time and lay off thousands of workers? Is that a good idea?

Hon Mr Eves: I see the Minister of Energy chomping at the bit down here to answer this question.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): First of all, I would like to know where the IMO is quoted as saying there are going to be power shortages this summer. I've not read anywhere that they've said that. All I've ever read is that they did a supply study and they say our supply is adequate.

Second, you won't give up. For five months before the market opened, you told us about rolling blackouts and brownouts and doubling prices. It hasn't happened. Now you stand here in June telling us we're going to have a doubling of the price, a spike in the market. We haven't exceeded the average price yet. The market opened May 1.

Will there be periods of time during summer seasons where the price will go up? Yes, it will. But over a 12-month period, measure the average price of hydro and it will be competitive.

All you do is keep saying, "The sky is falling." The only place the sky is falling is in your little, tiny NDP world.

1440

Mr Hampton: I guess, according to the Premier and the Minister of Energy, schools should shut down during the daytime when prices spike, hospitals should cancel all their surgeries and schedule them for midnight when the price comes down and industries should just lay off their employees.

Premier, I refer you to Consumer Reports, the most respected consumer journal in the United States. This is what they have to say about hydro deregulation and privatization: "Broken promises, deceptive marketing, and dreadful service have become accepted business practices in an increasingly Wild West marketplace where incessant telemarketers interrupt your dinner but customer service won't answer the phone." That's their account of what's going on now in the United States with deregulation and privatization of electricity.

In Ontario, we've had a million consumers literally bilked into signing rip-off contracts and your government says you're not going to do anything about it. Premier, why don't you follow the advice of Consumer Reports, which has watched what's happened in the United States, and cancel electricity privatization and deregulation now?

Hon Mr Stockwell: You talk about people who sign contracts leading up to the market opening. Why did some of those people sign contracts? Because you put a bus out there with your picture on it and a light bulb above it, telling them prices were going to double and we were going to have blackouts. You intimidated them, you scared them into signing these contracts. Now you stand in this House and tell us, "Why did they sign these contracts?"

Secondly, you're referring me to Consumer Reports. I'll refer you to the reality world. The reality world is this, Howard. The reality world is prices—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I don't know why you take exception to this. You ran around this province in a bus telling every senior you bumped into that prices were going to double and we were going to have blackouts. Then these people signed contracts to limit the exposure and Howie's mad because they signed contracts.

The only concern that you should have at any time in this debate is, if anything you said actually came to pass, everyone in this place would pass out because nothing you've said has come true at any time in six months. Stop fearmongering, Howie. Stop trying to frighten people, to frighten seniors and to scare the public. Nothing you've said has come to pass. It's all—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time is up.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): To the Premier, I just want to remind you that eight months ago I was telling you that salaries and bonuses were out of sight over at Hydro One and you said it would never happen.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm still waiting for that open letter that you claim was sent to 300 people.

Mr Hampton: I sent it to you last week.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No one received it.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That is not a point of order.

Mr Hampton: You don't answer your mail, just like you don't answer questions.

Premier, the Ontario Clean Air Alliance says that we can get cleaner air in Ontario by shutting down the coal-fired hydro generating stations. But then they point out that under your scheme to privatize and deregulate, Hydro One and OPG aren't planning to shut down any of this.

In fact, what they're planning, according to the privatization prospectus of Hydro One, is to build more transmission cables into the United States and instead of shutting down the coal-fired stations, transmit the electricity into the United States where they can make more money. So the United States gets cheaper electricity; we get the smog and dirty air from privatization.

Premier, can you tell me how this is good for Ontario's environment, how this is good for the health of Ontario people, your scheme for privatizing hydro and sending coal-fired, dirty electricity south?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, the leader of the third party knows that the government has taken several actions to limit pollution coming out of coal-powered plants in Ontario. He also knows that we have regulated the Lakeview generating station to cease burning coal by April 2005. I happen to think that the very report he's talking about talks about different methods by which the province of Ontario and OPG could get to exactly where he

claims he wants to go, to a cleaner environment in Ontario, and we're quite prepared to look at it.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Your plan to privatize hydro means the opposite. Right now, the coal plants only burn at peak times. If you go ahead with your crazy scheme, they'll be burning seven days a week, 24 hours a day. People are dying premature deaths because of the pollution coming out of those plants.

Premier, while you're busy promoting burning dirty coal, your own MPPs on the select committee on alternative fuels are taking a different course, including the parliamentary assistant for the Minister of the Environment. They've signed a report calling for a complete phase-out of coal- and oil-fired plants. Premier, are you going to follow their advice? Are you going to shut down those plants?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, I note that both her leader and the member herself haven't gone on to talk about the other issues mentioned in the very report they're quoting; ie, you haven't talked about how they're suggesting that the province of Ontario, once two nuclear reactors are back up and running, will alleviate the need by OPG to use and burn coal and certain other plants across Ontario. They have said, as I understand it, that that's a preferable alternative to what is being done today. Are you in favour of that? I haven't heard either you or your leader say today. You're quoting from that report. Do you embrace the recommendations of that report?

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): In February, former Premier Harris launched a \$15-million libel suit against the Globe and Mail because of an article mentioning the shooting death at Ipperwash. Apparently, Harris's legal bills are all being paid by the taxpayers and will be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. It's an important issue because, if members of the Legislature can simply launch a lawsuit using taxpayers' money, I think it can lead to threatening the media. I think that any member then can say, "You run that story and I'll sue you," and the taxpayers will be forced to pay the entire bill.

During your leadership campaign, Premier, you said you would look into this. I want to ask you, now that you've had a chance to look into it, is it appropriate for any member of the Legislature to use taxpayers' money on lawyers to launch a libel suit against the media?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'm not familiar, of course, with all the particulars of the lawsuit itself and what the claims are and aren't. I certainly am aware of the issues and the information that are divulged through the media with respect to this particular lawsuit.

My answer, as a matter of principle, to the honourable member would be, when members of the Legislature are engaged in their duties as members, be that as cabinet ministers or individual members or whatever, and incur

certain legal liabilities and situations and problems because of acting in their duties, then I think it is incumbent upon people to be able to look to the taxpayers for reimbursement.

But if, for example, in this particular lawsuit that he's talking about the former Premier is successful, I would presume that this should not cost the taxpayers of Ontario any money, and I presume that he would be able to obtain costs from the other side if in fact he has a valid case.

Mr Phillips: It's an extremely important issue and, frankly, Premier, you said four months ago that you would look into it, so I would assume that you've had a chance to examine this. This was not a case of Mr Harris defending himself. He launched a \$15-million lawsuit against the Globe and Mail. I think it was designed to chill them. I think it was designed to shut them up.

I say again to you, Premier, that it's an important issue. Do you believe it appropriate that members of the Legislature acting on their own, launching libel suits—is it appropriate for the taxpayers to be paying their legal bills when they launch a civil libel suit against the media? Is that appropriate or is it not, Mr Premier?

Hon Mr Eves: I don't believe that this lawsuit or any other lawsuit launched by any other member of the Legislature should end up costing the taxpayers of Ontario one cent. I don't believe it should.

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CENTRAL NORTH CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Simcoe North has the floor now. Order.

Mr Dunlop: My question today is for the Minister of Public Safety and Security. Minister, it has now been about seven months since the \$90-million Central North Correctional Centre opened in my riding in Simcoe North in the town of Penetanguishene. As the members of this House will recall, there was substantial outcry regarding the opening of this facility, mainly because it was being operated in a private-public partnership. I know there have been over 300 jobs created at that facility and about a \$30-million impact on the town of Penetang in construction alone.

Now that we are well on our way to the first anniversary of this facility, could you please update my constituents and the members of this House on the progress that Central North Correctional Centre is making.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I'd like to thank the member for Simcoe North for the question. As well, I want to thank the member for his support and interest in this project. He has rallied behind my predecessor, Rob Sampson, to help make this project the success it has been. I'm pleased to say the facility has been running very smoothly since its

opening just over seven months ago. The institution is almost at full capacity now, and it is becoming a benchmark for other facilities to match. Not only is it running more efficiently, but it is also providing a wide range of rehabilitation and industrial programming for the offenders so that they will have a better chance of becoming law-abiding citizens once their sentences have been served.

Mr Dunlop: Thank you very much, Minister, for that response, and I am pleased that Central North Correctional Centre is now nearly at full capacity and that the offenders are spending their sentences learning the value of turning their lives around. That's so important for any correctional centre we have in our country.

The members opposite are not the only ones to have voiced their concerns over the public-private partnership of this facility in my riding. Some community members in the town of Penetanguishene have also expressed concerns on the opening of this new facility. Minister, how are you addressing some of the current concerns?

Hon Mr Runciman: I'm very much aware of the concerns expressed by the community, both before and after the facility was opened. However, I'd like to tell the local member today and all members of the House that the opening of the facility has gone smoothly and has provided an economic boost to the local community. In fact, 70% of the facility's annual budget is being spent locally. That's unlike a fully public institution. That's more than \$20 million being spent each and every year at local car dealerships, restaurants, clothing stores and other small businesses. This is on top of the \$25 million that was pumped into the community during the construction phase. Finally, approximately 300 new jobs have been created in the community. These are local residents who work at the jail and spend their hard-earned money in the North Simcoe area. All sectors of the community have felt the positive impact of having this new facility in their neighbourhood.

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I want to return to the Premier and his answer to us earlier. You indicated that you did think it was inappropriate for the lawyers' bills of an individual member of the Legislature to be paid by the taxpayers. Can you assure the House today that Mr Harris's lawyers' bills are not currently being paid? If they are, will you assure the House that you will notify Mr Harris that, henceforth, he should pay his own lawyers' bills and should reimburse the taxpayers for the money he has expended on behalf of himself in this \$15-million lawsuit?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): I will say this to the honourable member: at the end of the day, I don't believe that Mr Harris's or anybody else's bills for such a lawsuit should end up costing the taxpayer any money and that the taxpayer should end up paying for them.

Mr Phillips: In my opinion, this libel suit was designed to chill the *Globe and Mail*, to shut them up, and if the government is allowed to do that, I think it's totally inappropriate. I return to the central question. We've been trying to find out how much he has actually spent. We can't get that, of course, because we're being silenced, we're being gagged on it.

I would like you today to assure the taxpayers that you have an undertaking from Mr Harris that he no longer will be using taxpayer money for his private lawsuit against the *Globe and Mail* and that he will undertake to repay the money he's spent. If he wins the lawsuit, so be it; if he loses it, so be it; but let Mr Harris handle that on his own. This is not something the taxpayers should be involved in.

Hon Mr Eves: I know the honourable member talks a little bit about the merits of the lawsuit and I'm not going to get into that because, quite frankly, I don't know what the merits of the lawsuit are on either side of the equation. I've heard of proposed offers through the media, as I assume he and other members of the Legislature have. But I will say very directly to him, at the end of the day, I will see to it that the taxpayers of Ontario do not end up paying any money in legal fees in this regard.

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. On March 21, 2002, the softwood lumber negotiations between Canada and the United States broke off, leaving Canada with subsidy and dumping duties totalling 27%. Clearly this is a blow to Ontario's softwood lumber industry.

There are remarkable parallels to the US federal farm bill and direct—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I apologize to the member for shouting like that. I didn't mean to. The member has the floor. Sorry for the interruption.

Mr Johnson: There are remarkable parallels to the US federal farm bill and direct subsidies of US dollars causing injury to Canadian and Ontario farmers.

The softwood lumber industry is vital to Ontario's economy. Ontario mills sell about \$1.5 billion a year in softwood lumber, with about \$1 billion in sales to the US. The Ontario industry employs over 10,000 workers in its mills and forest operations. It is concentrated in northern Ontario, where some 40 communities depend on the forest industry to sustain their economies.

Minister, could you please outline Ontario's position on the matter of softwood lumber and our commitment to fair trade?

Hon Jerry J. Ouellette (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the hard-working member for the question.

Ontario is seeking nothing less than full and unrestricted access to the US markets. Ontario has put substantive provincial proposals on the table since last December. However, the American response has been

less than favourable. It is clear that the US administration is not prepared to spend any political capital to rein in the American lumber companies on this particular issue.

Ontario does not subsidize its forest industry, nor do we believe that Ontario mills are dumping lumber on the US market. We believe that our timber prices are fair and reasonable, contrary to the US lumber industry claims.

Since a deal has not been reached, we have decided to pursue litigation with the World Trade Organization and NAFTA panels. We can expect fairer treatment from these impartial bodies than we received from the US agencies that imposed the 27% duties.

Mr Johnson: I am gratified that Ontario has decided to take our case to court.

Interjection.

Mr Johnson: However, I know that Ontario remains interested in a long-term, durable solution to this problem, in spite of the interjections of the member from Kingston and the Islands, and is prepared to resume talks if we get the right signal from the US.

Interjection.

Mr Johnson: If I can get over the interjections from the member for Kingston and the Islands, I'll continue with this question. He doesn't care about the farming in this area and he doesn't care about the softwood industry either.

Minister, what are the actions of the Ministry of Natural Resources to protect the interests of Ontario? What is the position of the major stakeholders in the matter and how is the ministry working with them to start approaching solutions?

Hon Mr Ouellette: Through the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation as well as the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, Ontario has been aggressively defending the province's interests as the trade cases proceed.

In terms of working with stakeholders, MNR is carrying out significant consultations with the province's lumber producers and their associations—the Ontario Forest Industries Association and the Ontario Lumber Manufacturers' Association. The industry supports both the ministry's efforts to defend its interests in litigation and the ministry's efforts in exploring a reasonable settlement.

We believe that our actions are in the best economic interests of the Ontario communities that depend on the forest industry for their livelihood.

1500

ONTARIO RENTAL HOUSING TRIBUNAL

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal has just boosted its fees to tenants, and many tenants are going to wind up on the street as a result. Some of the fees have gone up 150% and more. The eviction applications have gone up from \$60 to \$150. It's not just the landlords who

are going to pay for that, because the tenants have to pay if they want to stave off eviction. They have to reimburse the landlord for the cost.

Is it fair that, if they can't afford the fee, they will be put out on the street? Two hundred and fifty people are before that tribunal every day; 250 people who have to pay \$150 to keep their homes. Are you going to do something about that or are you going to have those 250 families on the street each and every day because of these fee increases?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I had trouble hearing the full question but I think I got the gist of it: you're concerned about the guideline rental increase that came out for last year and the applications for the above-guideline.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I couldn't hear your question. I can tell you the guideline increase for last year—and if you take a look at our whole history of the increase—is less, on average, than what the NDP's rate of increase was. If we kept up with the rate of increase of when you people were in power, there are a lot of people who wouldn't be able to afford the places they have today.

In terms of the above-guideline, that's the Tenant Protection Act. It goes through a hearing. If you want to elaborate and speak louder in your follow-up question, I'd be glad to answer it.

Mr Prue: I hope the minister has his earpiece in. That wasn't my question at all. My question is about how the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal has raised its fees from \$60 to \$150 for eviction and that the tenants end up having to pay that in the end if they want to stay in their homes. If they can't pay it, they're evicted. Two hundred and fifty families are before that tribunal every day.

My second part is that it's not the only fee. There are fees associated with above-guideline increases too. Photocopying has gone from 50 cents to \$1. Those are hundreds of pages long and tenants have to pay that if they want to fight that. These fees are exorbitant. Tenants are already behind the eight ball. They're up against lawyers, accountants and whoever the landlord brings. Look at what is happening: they're having to pay fees to stay in their own homes that they cannot afford. What are you going to do about those fees?

Hon Mr Hodgson: There is a cost to filing appeals. There is a cost in the system, there is a cost to hear it fairly and there is a cost in the photocopying. We raised the fees. If you take a look at the fee schedule, it's more balanced than it has ever been. There are more fee increases for the landlord on the above-guideline increases than there are for the tenant.

To go from 50 cents to \$1—and there are caps in place, so if you have a specific hardship, let me know and I'll take a look at it again—we've tried to find the right balance to make sure the system's open and accessible but also has appropriate recovery of costs, because there is a huge expense to this.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Between 1995 and October 2000, thousands of tonnes of hazardous waste from the Swaru incinerator were sent to the Glanbrook landfill site near Hamilton.

Minister, this occurred on the watch of your government. Time and time again, samples were not tested. Time and time again, samples were analyzed six months after the materials were dumped in the landfill site. This went on for over five years, until the company came forward in October of 2000 and said there was a problem.

Minister, your ministry investigated for 18 months and has not laid any charges against the company or the city for this. Clearly what we see here is a pattern of neglect from your government. Clearly, for five years you let this happen. Where was the Ministry of the Environment? Where were the inspectors? Where were the checks and balances to ensure these soil samples were being tested?

Minister, you had five years. It was only after the company came forward that you investigated it. Can you explain to the House why in those five years the Ministry of the Environment not once stepped in when repeatedly soil samples showed hazardous waste was being taken? What steps should your ministry have taken to ensure this will not happen in five years, as it did until—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Let me first allay any fears for the people who live in the area. There have been a number of sample testings done by the city of Hamilton and the Ministry of the Environment. All those tests have come back negative. There have not been any positive tests with respect to contamination.

The question is how we may move forward on this. Let me say that as we've looked at this, and the Ministry of the Environment examined the files in the past, we're trying to determine exactly how the C of A got approved, who approved the C of A and what it got approved for. There's some difficulty following through, and the Ministry of the Environment is doing that as we speak. All I can suggest to the member opposite is, as this information becomes available, I will provide it to you.

But I want to calm the residents in the community and hopefully calm you as well. All the testing we've had, all the testing that has come back has indicated that the leachate is fine. It's not running. The contamination is contained. I just think we should maintain that composure as we discuss this. I'm not arguing with the member opposite. There are many questions that need to be answered here, but I don't think we should be alarmist and create an issue in the community when we don't need to create an issue, when it is in fact contained.

Mr Agostino: Minister, you have investigated this for 18 months. Let me tell you, there were tests that were failed in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 2000. There was clear evidence that those tests showed there was hazard-

ous waste and this material was still taken to the landfill site and dumped.

Again, I'm just trying to understand what role your ministry played here. Where were the inspectors? Where were the checks and balances? At any time, did the ministry look at the evidence that was there? At any time, did the ministry deal with the company or the landfill site to see if tests were being done, how long it took for those tests to come back, where that material was going and how much of it got dumped? We don't have any of those answers. You had 18 months. You investigated. You did not lay any charges against the company. That clearly shows the company did nothing wrong and the problem was with the Ministry of the Environment, your regulations, your certificate. For five years this government neglected to verify what was happening. It's responsible for that hazardous material going to that landfill site. I'm asking you today, will you undertake an independent outside investigation of the role that the ministry played in those five years in regard to this particular item?

Hon Mr Stockwell: As I said, I think we should maintain a level of composure here.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: There are communities that surround this site that are also very interested in this issue, and they hear the member talking about hazardous waste and so on. Let's be clear: ongoing testing of the stabilized fly ash has indicated it's non-hazardous. OK? Additional comprehensive testing of the stabilized waste indicates it's non-hazardous.

Mr Agostino: That's today.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I appreciate that, to the member opposite. Right now, you're suggesting to the constituents in the community there's a hazardous waste site there. At this point in time, all the testing has indicated it's non-hazardous.

Mr Agostino: That's now. What about 1995 to 2000?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I say to the member opposite, those are the questions we need to answer, but before we start alarming a community by suggesting there are hazardous wastes being dumped in that spot, and all the testing indicates it's non-hazardous—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I know the member opposite wants to incite the community. I understand that, but all I want to suggest to the member opposite—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: All I want to suggest to the member is, I know you want to incite the community and make an issue when there isn't any testing that indicates that, I appreciate that, but that's not the role of the government.

Mr Agostino: For five years you guys were negligent. That's why it happened.

Hon Mr Stockwell: If there's a problem, we will deal with it.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Stockwell: If there's a problem, we will deal with it, but all indications are that it's non-hazardous at this time.

MAMMOGRAPHY SERVICES

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member for Peterborough, we'll wait till it gets a little quieter here. We've got some shouting going back and forth.

While we're waiting, the member for Sudbury, who has MacLeod Public School here, I'm sure would like to get on with question period for our friends from MacLeod school in Sudbury.

The member for Peterborough, sorry for the interruption.

Mr Stewart: As I said, my question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, last week the member from Windsor West began fearmongering in my riding, spreading incorrect information about the wait times for radiation and diagnostic services at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre. I was hoping my question to you last week would clarify an important issue in my riding from the member opposite. I am tired of the accusations the member is making against me, my local hospital and the Ministry of Health. I will once again ask you, Minister—

1510

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Section 23(i) of the standing orders specifically forbids one member to impute "false or unavowed motives to another member." I believe the member from Peterborough has done precisely that.

Interjections.

The Speaker: We can announce the MacLeod school on this side too. Order. I would ask all members to be careful of what they're saying. Certainly when one side does it, the other side does it. We are honourable members, and I would ask all members to kindly watch what they say. I try and listen as closely as I can. It's sometimes difficult to do that, but I don't think it's helpful when we do that. What ends up happening, of course, is that you don't get your question asked anyway because you just yell at each other. The member for Peterborough.

Mr Stewart: Mr Speaker, I indeed am trying to pick my words as carefully as I possibly can.

I will once again ask the minister to ease the worries of my constituents, many of whom have experienced unwarranted anxiety and fear, and clarify the reality of wait times for radiation diagnostics in my riding.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I will take the Speaker's words, carefully considered, and say that the honourable member from Windsor West was a tad confused when she began making claims against the Peterborough Regional Health Centre.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Will the minister take his seat? Member for Windsor West, please come to order. I can't hear the question.

Minister, sorry for the interruption.

Hon Mr Clement: I did try to clarify the facts on Thursday. The member for Windsor West released yet another communiqué afterwards stating, "Women are currently waiting three times the recommended wait time for mammography." The wait times for mammography that the honourable member opposite speaks of include non-symptomatic women who are scheduled regular mammograms for the breast screening program. These regular screenings are what we on this side of the House call preventive medicine, detecting potential health problems before the symptoms are present.

With the logic the honourable member uses, one would be arguing that any annual examination means that the wait time is one year. That's what the honourable member is suggesting. That's why they call it annual testing. Our record is clear. If there is an emergency in Peterborough, they are looked after, and that's what the people of Ontario care about.

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. I'm afraid no one heard.

Member for Peterborough.

Mr Stewart: Thank you, Mr Minister, for clarifying the facts on radiology wait times. It appears the member opposite is in a state of confusion.

After all the paranoia created in my riding last week by the member opposite, I was pleased to read the report on health care released by Maclean's magazine. I've always trusted my local experts to tell me the status of health care in my riding, but it's nice to see a national study acknowledge the gains Peterborough is making.

I understand the Windsor area is also reflected well in this study. I'm sure the member from Windsor West now realizes that—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Sorry, member for Peterborough. This is the last warning for the member for Windsor West. I can't keep getting up like this. Quite frankly, we would have gotten down to another Liberal question, had I not been up—we were going very well—and you're going to end up not getting another question now. If the members want to have questions, they can do that; if they want to just shout at each other, then we'll just stand up here. We were moving very quickly and now we lose questions from members who may want to ask questions. The only reason is that people want to shout at each other, and quite frankly no one at home hears what you're shouting anyway. Either side isn't going to change the other side. I've been here 10 years and it hasn't happened yet, so your shouting is actually pointless.

Member for Peterborough, sorry again for the interruption.

Mr Stewart: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I mentioned, I understand that the Windsor area was also reflected

well in this study, and I'm sure the member now realizes that all the health initiatives this government has made in her riding are paying off.

Minister, can you please expand on what the Maclean's article said, especially about mammography services in my community?

Hon Mr Clement: The Maclean's health report is indeed out. As the member for Peterborough is already aware, his community gained seven places from last year's overall ranking. The report touches on two areas where Peterborough excels: stroke survival rates and mammography wait times. In fact, mammography services in Peterborough ranked fourth in all of Canada. I know the member for Peterborough is very proud of that; we're all very proud of that.

But I would like to take this time to acknowledge another community's high ranking, the Windsor-Sarnia area. While the member for Windsor West occasionally talks about the horrors of health care in her area, the Maclean's report is telling a much different story. Since last year's study, the Windsor area climbed 13 spots, ranking 19th overall in Canada. So while she releases communiqués about how poor mammography services are, Maclean's tells a different story. In fact, Maclean's ranks Windsor-Sarnia as the number one community in Canada to have a mammogram—number one in Canada.

CILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the leader of the government. Mr Premier, as leader of the government, are you aware of just how angry and how upset the people of eastern Ontario are, not just in Ottawa but in Pembroke, Renfrew and Hawkesbury and Cornwall and Napanee and many communities through the region, about your government's proposed shutdown of the children's heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'd refer this question to the Minister of Health and Long-term Care.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): We are, of course, all waiting for the review of the review by Dr Keon and I would not wish to prejudice his comments or his conclusions.

Of course, this is a very emotional issue for the entire community. It's emotional for all of us. What we all want, and I'm presuming I'm including the honourable member opposite in this, is to ensure that any child who has this kind of condition that needs to be remedied has the best, and the best available, kind of care that we can possibly pursue in Ontario. That is the goal that this government has on this side of the House. We want the best results, the best outcomes, after cardiac surgery involving a person age zero to 18. That's what we all want and we are seeking a way to get there to ensure that is not only the case now but also in the future as well.

Mr Conway: This past Sunday afternoon in my home community of Pembroke, hundreds of people gathered at the waterfront to express to me, and the mayors and other community leaders, their upset, their anger, their incredulity at what's happening at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. They presented to me, after just a few days, a petition signed by over 10,000 people in my part of the upper Ottawa Valley. They've great respect for and confidence in Dr Keon, but these people, particularly the scores of young moms and dads who were at the meeting, wanted me to stand here and say to you, Minister, and more importantly to you, Mr Premier, that these parents are very pleased with the service they've been provided with by the children's heart surgery unit at CHEO. They are extremely upset not just at the prospect of the loss of that cardiac unit but all of the support services that would go with it. The thought that these young families would have to travel from communities like Beachburg and Eganville and Pembroke, not 150 kilometres to Ottawa but 400 and 500 and 550 kilometres to Toronto through terrible country in the wintertime, is beyond their comprehension. These people, these petitioners—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member's time is up.

Hon Mr Clement: Of course, the pediatric review committee that originally looked at this issue did take into account travel times, did take into account the issues of convenience, but ultimately came down on the side that if increased mortality was the result of keeping things the way that they were, no one could countenance that in our society.

We are all trying to get to the best result for our kids as close to home as possible. That is the whole intention of the review. That is why the review recommended that we have a complete, province-wide pediatric cardiac care system, not five hospitals operating by themselves alone; that they all be part of a province-wide pediatric cardiac care system. That bodes well for CHEO. That means CHEO is part of a world-class, province-wide cardiac care service. That is what we want. We want CHEO to be excellent at what it does. We want excellent results for our kids in the future.

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BIOTECHNOLOGY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the BIO 2002 conference in Toronto—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We'll let him start over. I apologize; there was some carrying on. I hate to interrupt him like that when he's on a roll. We'll start over.

Mr Gill: As I was saying, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the BIO 2002 conference in Toronto, the largest biotech conference in the world. I'd

like to welcome all the delegates to our beautiful province.

Along with many other topics, they are also discussing biotechnology and the use of alternate fuels. This is very timely, since our government has promised to safeguard the environment by using green fuels made from agriculture commodities. David Suzuki and other biotech opponents disagree. They are trying to say we are not ready for biotechnology. Minister, can you explain to individuals who hold this belief how Ontario's agriculture products can be converted into environmentally friendly fuels?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I would like to thank the member for the question. Let me say first off that our government fully supports the development of a life science economy that will address environmental issues on the one hand and foster economic activity in Ontario on the other hand. Because biodiesel is made from agricultural commodities such as soybeans or by-products from the rendering industry, it's identified as one of the most effective ways Ontario can meet air quality and greenhouse gas reductions. So it's very important that we consider that.

We heard the committee talk about that with its recent report. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food recognizes the importance of biotechnology because it can lead to new markets that can help find ways to use our excess agricultural product. What this means to the agricultural community is that we have benefits. Our environment is safer and the rural economy enjoys new activities, jobs and businesses. It's a win-win for everyone.

Mr Gill: It's difficult to believe there are skeptics of biotech research, especially when you address these biofuel issues.

Summer seems finally to be here, and along with it come concerns about smog. I know we are aggressively attacking the smog problem. The Drive Clean program has reduced emissions by 11.5% in the Golden Horseshoe. Minister, how does this government, and specifically your Ministry of Agriculture and Food, intend to help in reducing emissions?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say we want Ontario to be one of the most competitive places in North America. One of the ways we can do this is by proposing to promote the use of environmentally friendly products made by the agricultural community in the province. Biodiesels are completely interchangeable with petroleum-based diesel fuels. The fuel is being adopted by a number of commercial truck fleets in Ontario, including Toronto Hydro, which seems like a little bit of an irony. Biodiesel is currently being imported from the US. The production and use of biofuels is identified as one of the most cost-effective ways Ontario can meet air quality standards and greenhouse reduction targets. By running vehicles on biodiesel, urban centres could reduce emissions and rural Ontario would experience a whole new industry whereby agricultural products will be used to replace petroleum-based fuels, a win-win for the agricultural community.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): This question is for the Minister of Education. It is well documented that your government's funding formula is biased against urban school boards with small community-based schools. You have acknowledged finally that there is a problem with the funding formula and ordered a review. The problem is, Minister, schools are slated to be closed; indeed, St Aloysius school in my riding is slated to be closed. It is a highly respected school with an excellent special education program and consistently high standardized test scores, and it is a focus point for the community. Grandparents pick up children, when the parents are working, for lunch and after school. All of this is going to end if that school closes. The population is growing in that part of East York.

I am asking you, Minister, for the sake of that community and these children, what are you going to do to help to keep this school from being closed? Will you place a moratorium on the closure of these community-based schools at least until the review of your funding formula is complete, and then we can look at those recommendations and go from there? Will you do that to help my community today, Minister?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): In response to the question from the member in the third party, as I noted yesterday, school closings are the responsibility of trustees on school boards. That has always been their responsibility. They make those decisions based on many reasons. I would recommend that the member of the third party, if she has concerns, should speak to the local school board.

I know that school closings are always very difficult issues. I don't think there's ever been a school closed that hasn't caused a lot of concern for parents, and I can understand that concern. But it is a local trustee decision.

I can give you facts that indicate that 37 public and Catholic schools were closed in Toronto between 1985 and 1990. In 1995 to 2000, there were only 20. There were more schools closed in Toronto between 1985 and 1990 than there have been recently, so you can't blame it on the funding formula as you have been.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 118

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise on a serious point of order with regard to Bill 118, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, standing in the name of Mr Martin, which has received first reading and is currently on the order paper.

Standing order 56 states that, "Any bill, resolution, motion or address, the passage of which would impose a tax or specifically direct the allocation of public funds ... shall be proposed only by a minister of the crown."

I believe that if you examine section 1 of the bill and the subsequent sections of this proposed act, you will find that the bill is in violation of standing order 56.

In a ruling of December 6, 1968, Speaker Cass defined a money bill as "any bill, the real purpose of which is to raise, repeal, abate or direct the appropriation of public revenue." He further indicated that a bill enlarging the class of persons eligible for payments out of public revenue was a money bill and hence outside the competence of a private member.

In Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, sixth edition, with respect to the financial relations between the crown and Parliament, section 595 reads:

"The crown, being the executive power, has the responsibility for the raising and spending of money. Acting through responsible ministers, the crown makes known to the Commons the financial necessities of government. The Commons grants such aids and supplies as are necessary to meet the demands of the crown and provides through taxes and other sources of revenue the ways and means to meet the supplies that have been granted. The crown, therefore, demands money, the Commons grants it and the Senate assents to the grant. The Commons does not vote any money except for the necessities of the country as defined by the crown."

Furthermore, section 598 of Beauchesne's reads, "No cases can be found of any private member receiving the authority of the crown to propose a bill or motion involving either the expenditure of public money or an increase in taxation."

I go to Erskine May, the 21st edition, under "General Rules of Financial Procedure of the Commons." From the 21st edition I quote from page 688:

"Rule 2. The financial initiative of the crown. A charge cannot be taken into consideration unless it is demanded by the crown or recommended from the crown."

Furthermore, on page 691, "The long established and strictly observed rule of procedure, which expresses a principle of the highest constitutional importance, that no public charge can be incurred except on the initiative of the crown...."

It further goes on, on page 993, under "Public Money," section 46—

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Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): It's sleazy, John.

Hon Mr Baird: I say to the member opposite that this should be an issue not involving personalities, it should be about the issue in question. I hope he'll have the opportunity to listen—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I know he's wrapping up. The member for Sault Ste Marie, please come to order. I'm listening to the member.

Sorry for the interruption. Chief government whip.

Hon Mr Baird: It's regrettable that the member would say those types of things. I think it's beneath him and it's beneath the people he represents in this place.

On page 993: "46. Recommendation from crown required on application relating to public money. This House will receive no petition for any sum relating to public service or proceed upon any motion for a grant or charge upon the public revenue, whether payable out of the consolidated" revenue "fund or the national loans fund or out of money to be provided by Parliament, or for releasing or compounding any sum of money owing to the crown, unless recommended from the crown."

I have two or three quick precedents, and I'll be brief, Mr Speaker. On Friday, October 12, 1973, the Speaker rose and quoted from the legislative counsel, whose opinion he accepted: "It is the opinion of this office that the proposed bill in question is a money bill. Section 2 of section 7 of the act provides for the payment of interest by the Treasurer of Ontario at a rate which is to fluctuate as to reflect market conditions at the time the interest is paid. Since the interest is paid out of the consolidated revenue fund, and under today's conditions would probably be at a rate which is higher than the 5% and 6.5% rate established under the act, this would involve an expenditure of public funds." The Speaker then accordingly removed the bill from the order paper.

On May 17, 1979, the Speaker ruled, "This afternoon the member for Sudbury East, Mr Martel, introduced a bill entitled An Act respecting insurance services of the Ontario health insurance plan. At the time that the member made his explanation of the bill's purpose, I felt that it was a money bill. However, I reserved a ruling on it until I could examine it more carefully. Having done so, it is obvious to me that as the bill would increase the services under OHIP, it must of necessity increase the expenditure of public funds out of the plan. I must rule that the bill is a money bill, which can only be introduced by a minister of the crown, supported by a message from the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor. The bill is therefore out of order and will be omitted from the order paper."

Again, finally, on June 21, 1983, the Speaker ruled as follows: "Yesterday afternoon, the member for Sudbury East, Mr Martel, introduced a bill entitled An Act respecting insurance services under the OHIP plan. On careful examination, I find the principle of the bill yesterday to be the same as the one introduced by the member on May 17, 1979, and subsequently ruled out of order by Mr Speaker Stokes. His reasons at the time were that the bill would increase the services under OHIP and must of necessity increase the expenditure of public funds under the plan. I totally concur in that ruling and find that the bill, being a money bill, can only be introduced by a minister of the crown, supported by a message from the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor." I would point out Speaker Stokes was a New Democratic Party member of this place.

Finally, a very good ruling, which will be the last one, and then I'll take my seat: on May 9, 1991, Mr Speaker stood up: "On Monday, April 21, the member for Etobicoke West"—the now government House leader and former Speaker, but he was not a former Speaker at

that time—"introduced a bill entitled An Act respecting government expenditures. It has been brought to my attention that section 1 of this bill specifically directs the allocation of public funds. I must therefore rule the bill is a contravention of section 54 of our standing orders and can only be proposed by a minister of the crown, supported by a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor. The bill is therefore out of order and must be omitted from the orders."

Briefly, the title of the bill requires annual cost-of-living adjustments. Subsection 1(1) of the bill again uses the word "requiring," mandates clearly directing money from the consolidated revenue fund. I think it's an important principle, not just within the standing orders, but of the way our government and our parliamentary system operate.

I'll be happy to provide this information to you. We ask for your ruling on this important issue.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Mr Speaker, you're going to be called upon to make a ruling as to whether or not this bill is or is not in order. First of all, the member for Sault Ste Marie is one of the members in this House of great conscience. On behalf of the official opposition, I can't determine how you will judge this, but I would ask you, in your capacity as Speaker, that if you find the bill to be out of order, the member be allowed to bring something in a resolution form to the same effect. I can give this House the undertaking that the official opposition would support that, and I would assume the government would want to support that as well so that we have the opportunity to discuss this very important issue.

So I would ask you to consider the waiving of notice requirements and allowing the member, who brings this issue forward in very good conscience—I believe it's in order; I don't want to suggest for a moment that it's not. This was offered at House leaders last week—that needs to be said—and the government has chosen to wait this long, obviously trying to put you, sir, in a position where you're forced to make a difficult decision on short notice.

I would say to the chief government whip and to the government opposite that if in fact the Speaker finds this out of order, the same functionality of the bill can be put into a resolution format and be allowed to be debated. That being said, in my view, the bill is in order and it ought to continue for debate on Thursday morning as has been proposed, and it would be my hope that it does.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I express gratitude to the government whip for advising me of his intention to bring this point of order. Mind you, it was but a few minutes prior to raising the point of order. He did, however, signal his interest in this matter last Thursday.

First, we have to look at this bill very carefully. Second, standing order 56 is long-standing. Third, members rely upon, and I put to you, Speaker, that the Speaker has to give great weight to, not only the historical rulings of this House in terms of the response to points of order but the precedents that have been created by any number of bills which have been advanced at first reading, then proceeded to second reading

and been permitted, notwithstanding that a point of order has not been raised. A bill is either in order or it isn't, and the mere fact that a point of order hasn't been raised does not cure a bill. Therefore, I put to you that we have a history or a succession of bills that have received second reading, which the Speaker implicitly has approved by virtue of hearing the debate around second reading and permitting the matter to go to a vote.

Virtually any policy initiative suggested by way of private members' public business, private members' bills, is going to inherently involve some sort of expenditure of monies that wouldn't have existed prior to that bill being advanced; in contrast to, let's say, resolutions, which are merely opinion. A bill does things, and to do things, almost inevitably you need money.

Let me distinguish this, for instance, from the illustration provided by the government House leader regarding a bill advanced by Mr Martel, which was ruled out of order by Speaker Stokes. Mr Martel wanted to create, as I understand that bill, a new class of things which fell under the umbrella of OHIP. In this bill—a very short bill, very easily read—there is no suggestion that, for instance, there be a redefinition of who is entitled to ODSP. We're dealing with the existing class of persons, the existing group of persons.

As well—and this is very important—please take a look at section 2 of Bill 118. Section 2 is critical to the bill having any effect. The bill is very carefully drafted. The author of the bill was well aware of standing order 56. Look at the language: "A regulation made under paragraph 4.1 of subsection (1) may provide"—permissive but not mandatory—"that the amount of income support provided be adjusted on April 1," to wit, giving effect to the indexing factor being proposed. That is critical. That is the section of the bill that puts it into action, that triggers it, that makes it work. It is permissive and it relies upon regulation, which is not in the scope or within the capacity of the private member, Mr Martin, who puts this bill forward for first reading; it's within the scope of the government. It's the government that could advance and must advance regulations and approve them through either one of the two channels by which regulations are approved.

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This does not, in and of itself, necessarily entail an increased expenditure. Having said that, I put to you that most, if not all, private members' bills that advance new policies or broaden policy initiatives inherently entail cost. This does not, of course, create a new tax. I put it to you that this bill is consistent with any number of bills which have preceded it in this House during the course of the last year, two years or three years and which have received approval, either explicitly or implicitly, by you, the Chair, the Speaker.

The bill has been drafted carefully, clearly cognizant of the impact of standing order 56. I put it to you, sir, that if reflection is required, then upon reflection the Speaker ought to find, and should find, that this bill in fact

complies, because of its very specific construction, with standing order 56.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, chief government whip and the House leaders for both the official opposition and the third party. I will review the bill and reserve my judgment.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: On Thursday of this past week, the member from Peterborough stood in the House and I understand that he was corrected by the member from Thunder Bay-Atikoken as to information that was being relayed to the House. The information was in fact coming from the Ontario Association of Radiologists.

I would ask the Speaker if he could also engage the Minister of Health to table information as to the difference between urgent and—

The Speaker: I'm afraid it's not a point of order.

PETITIONS

CILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I'm enormously proud and pleased this afternoon to present to this Legislature several petitions signed by over 10,000 of my constituents and our neighbours on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River Valley, which petitions read:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the province is considering closing the cardiac unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Ottawa, we request that the Legislative Assembly refrain from this action, which will cost the lives of children in this area who require emergency care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Keep open the full cardiac unit at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Ottawa."

I'm pleased to sign and endorse this petition and present it to you, Mr Speaker.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"I do support the bill proposing an amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases, and I urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage to the bill."

This is signed by hundreds of Ontarians, as well as by myself.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility of life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralizing children's heart surgery in Toronto will force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and ensure that top-quality, accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

I've also signed the petition, along with 2,100 of my constituents.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many high school students in Ontario, outraged at the harshness of the new curriculum, choose to leave school on May 15, 2002;

"Inadequate funding made difficult the implementation of the new curriculum;

"High school students should not be used as forced labour in addition to the extra hours required for the new curriculum;

"There is inadequate funding for the double-cohort year. Universities and colleges will have trouble providing room for all those students;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We demand that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students establish a funding model to correct the shortcomings in the system;

"Further be it resolved that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students make recommendations to help those students who have had to change their career paths due to the harshness of the new system;

"Further be it resolved that students are no longer to do compulsory volunteer work;

"Further be it resolved that adequate funding be given for the double-cohort year."

That's signed by Emily Beaulieu, John Maddalena and hundreds of others as well as by myself.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I'm pleased to introduce a petition that was in fact addressed to the Honourable Dan Newman, sent by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, dealing with concerns about the education system. I'm pleased to offer that for the consideration of the table.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES SERVICES DE SANTÉ POUR ENFANTS

Mrs Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): I have a petition from over 1,000 people in my riding.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que le gouvernement planifie la fermeture du service de chirurgie cardiaque à l'hôpital pour enfants de l'est de l'Ontario;

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to centralize all cardiac services for children in Toronto;

« Attendu que la chirurgie cardiaque à l'hôpital pour enfants est un service essentiel pour les enfants de l'est de l'Ontario et pour tous les enfants francophones de toute la province;

"Whereas the lives of children may be at risk if forced to travel to Toronto for cardiac care;

« Attendu que les enfants et leur famille se verront imposer des dépenses et des soucis inutiles s'ils doivent se rendre à Toronto pour obtenir des services cardiaques;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the government halt immediately its decision to close cardiac surgery services at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa."

I'm proud to sign this petition.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'm very happy to present one set of petitions from the people in my riding, among tens of thousands.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralization of children's heart surgery in Toronto would force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and to ensure that top-quality accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

I affix my signature to this petition as well.

HYDRO ONE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

I fully agree with this petition and have signed my signature to it.

1550

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition deals with the double cohort and the quality in education. It's from the College Student Alliance, who are partners in learning. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, from students at Cambrian College.

"Whereas by eliminating the fifth year of high school the government of Ontario has created a double cohort of students; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has promised that there will be a space at a university or college for every willing and qualified student; and

“Whereas Ontario’s universities and colleges have not received sufficient funding from the government of Ontario to accommodate these double cohort students; and

“Whereas the quality of education at Ontario’s universities and colleges has been declining in recent years; and

“Whereas the double cohort students will add an additional strain on an already fragile university and college system;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: provide full funding for every new student entering Ontario’s universities and colleges; provide additional funding to increase quality at Ontario’s universities and colleges; provide targeted funding to colleges for skills and innovation; and increase the per student funding to the national average over the next five years.”

I affix my signature to this petition as I am in agreement with it. I give it to our new page, Lauren, to bring to the desk.

MANDATORY DRUG TESTING

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition that’s headed “Say No to Mandatory Drug Testing.” It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it says:

“Whereas the government of Ontario proposes to implement mandatory drug testing for Ontario Works recipients;

We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to revise this policy. Specifically, we find the proposed program punitive in nature. We strongly oppose treatment for substance abuse being tied to welfare benefits, and we strongly support individuals being respected in their ability and right to make informed choices, and treatment plans to be entered into voluntarily and negotiated between a health professional and the individual, not Ontario Works staff.”

As required by the rules, I have signed this and I’m handing it to our new page, Lindsey.

SERVICES DE SANTÉ POUR ENFANTS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): J’ai ici une pétition qui contient 1795 noms et qui provient de Green Valley, la communauté où habite Patrick Quesnel, qui a subi 11 opérations à cœur ouvert.

« Attendu que le gouvernement de l’Ontario est en train de fermer le service de chirurgie cardiaque à l’intention des enfants fonctionnant actuellement à l’hôpital pour enfants de l’est de l’Ontario;

« Attendu que la fermeture de ce programme restreindrait l’accès des enfants de l’est de l’Ontario à cette chirurgie, qui sauve des vies;

« Attendu que CHEO traite chaque année 140 enfants gravement malades à proximité de leur foyer;

« Attendu que la centralisation des services de chirurgie cardiaque pour les enfants à Toronto obligerait

les patients et les parents à s’éloigner de 400 kilomètres à 600 kilomètres de leur foyer à un moment difficile;

« Attendu qu’une partie du personnel de ce programme à l’hôpital CHEO parle français, et que de ce fait la population francophone a accès à des conseils médicaux de qualité supérieure en français,

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario d’annuler immédiatement la décision du gouvernement d’abolir ce programme, qui sauve des vies, et de veiller à ce que chaque enfant de l’est de l’Ontario continue d’avoir pleinement accès à des soins de santé de qualité supérieure. »

J’y ajoute ma signature.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition signed regarding the school funding crisis here in the city of Toronto. It is to the provincial Legislature of Ontario.

“Whereas the education funding formula will oblige the Toronto District School Board to cut \$123.5 million in programs and services to students and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the provincial Legislature of Ontario to join the Toronto District School Board in its call for the government of Ontario to: begin an immediate review of the funding formula; maintain current funding levels of 2001-02 until that review is completed; put our children first by providing the level of funding for the public school system that our children need and deserve.

“We call upon the government to work with school boards across Ontario so that everyone charged with delivering education can ensure that students can succeed in school.”

I agree with all of the petitioners who have signed this petition and I hope that the government supports and adopts the measures they’ve called for. I have affixed my signature to it.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Mike Harris government promised to institute patient-based budgeting for health care services in the 1995 Common Sense Revolution; and

“Whereas community care access centres now face a collective shortfall; and

“Whereas due to this funding shortfall, CCACs have cut back on home care services affecting sick, elderly Ontarians; and

“Whereas these cuts in services are mostly in home-making services, forcing Ontarians into more expensive long-term-care facilities or back into hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to immediately institute real patient-based budgeting for health care services, including home care, so as to

ensure that working families in Ontario can access the health care services they need."

I will very happily affix my signature to this petition.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition and it's entitled, "Listen: Our Hearing is Important!"

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris and Eves government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas the Harris and Eves government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserviced areas across the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Harris-Eves government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

I have affixed my signature to this petition because I agree with it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement, when Bill 124 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on second reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That on the same day that the bill receives second reading, it may be called for third reading; and

When the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mrs Molinari has moved government notice of motion number 12. Minister?

1600

Hon Mrs Molinari: I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the motion regarding An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement.

In recent years, building code users—property owners, builders, contractors, designers and building officials—have called for reforms, and I think it's time to move ahead with this legislation.

The foundation for this proposed legislation is based on recommendations from the Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group, BRRAG. This advisory panel represented a broad spectrum of builders, designers, regulatory officials and consumers. Throughout the summer of 2001, discussions were held with stakeholders on how best to implement changes to the Building Code Act that are workable and effective.

In essence, this proposed legislation would allow building officials to make better decisions faster. If passed, the legislation would represent the most comprehensive and wide-ranging changes to the province's building code enforcement in over 25 years. It would improve public safety by enhancing the qualifications and accountability of building practitioners, streamline the building regulatory system and strengthen the province's Smart Growth agenda.

Ensuring public safety is a government priority and it is the key objective of the proposed legislation. This is achieved in part by increasing the knowledge of building practitioners. The legislation would require building designers, building inspectors and those working for registered code agencies to meet qualifications set by the province. These individuals would have to pass assessments related to their knowledge of the building code. This improved building code competency will lead to building plans that comply with safety standards in the code. As we know, it is critical for designers and building inspectors to know what's in the Ontario building code. This will help ensure that all drawings and specifications comply with the technical requirements of the code. Improving code knowledge of designers, for example, will mean that designers get it right the first time, and that saves time and money.

The proposed legislation would also require designers, builders and registered code agencies to have insurance. This will result in more accountability for the work they do and provides an additional incentive to avoid defects. Insurance coverage would be improved for the traditional professional indemnity policies covering designers and would be extended to RCAs. There would also be new

coverage required for seven years after construction for major structural defects. The building code would address the type and scope of coverage, coverage levels, period of insurance, deductibles and exemptions. The province intends to require this extended insurance for general contractors responsible for structural work who work on non-residential projects with a value of \$50,000 or more. Persons who build their own homes would be exempt, as would home renovators.

New home builders currently registered under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act already provide warranty coverage, and this proposed legislation would recognize this. As part of this legislation, a registration system for building designers and RCAs would be established. Details would be set out in the building code. This system would be used to ensure these practitioners have staff with the appropriate code knowledge, as well as the necessary insurance. As we know, builders are already registered through the Ontario new home warranty plan. Other builders would not be subject to registration, but would have their insurance coverage verified by municipalities prior to construction.

This legislation also sets new minimum service standards and mandatory qualifications for inspectors. It would also clarify the roles and responsibilities of different building practitioners. Municipal building inspectors would be covered by a new code of conduct that recognizes the significant role and authority they hold in the approval process. Municipalities would develop their own codes of conduct governing the enforcement practices of chief building officials and building inspectors in order to promote appropriate standards of behaviour.

The province would set the same high standards for registered code agencies. They would be given all the powers required to carry out their responsibilities, including the power to inspect, issue orders and stop work if necessary to protect public safety. These standards would require their staff to have a high level of code knowledge. In addition, there would be stringent conflict-of-interest requirements to ensure the integrity of these agencies.

As well, new province-wide standards for inspections would mean that building officials have more certainty about what is expected from them. The legislation would establish mandatory inspections for all types of new construction. This would help ensure that projects are completed according to the approved plans of the code.

This legislation provides flexibility for municipalities in enforcing the Building Code Act and the Ontario building code. Municipalities would have several options to meet new minimum service standards: they could rely on their own staff, provide joint service delivery with other municipalities or contract some or all of the enforcement duties to registered code agencies. The bottom line is that municipalities would make these decisions since they are in the best position to do so.

Streamlining is another key component of this proposed legislation. Reducing red tape and encouraging innovation are important to this government.

This proposed legislation would reform the building regulatory system by reducing approval times and increasing certainty and predictability for builders and owners. Measures include establishing a standard building permit application; setting time frames for building permit decisions; allowing municipalities to reduce duplicated reviews of similar building plans; limiting building permit fees to the reasonable cost of enforcement; allowing municipalities to outsource plan reviews and construction inspections to registered code agencies; providing a speedier appeal process to the Ontario Municipal Board for site plan matters; requiring that mandatory inspections take place within a set time frame; and granting the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the power to issue province-wide interpretation of the building code and the authority to approve alternative designs, systems and materials, provided the same level of performance established by the building code is maintained. These measures would promote more fairness and certainty in Ontario's building permit system.

Should the legislation be passed, it would be fully implemented within 18 months of royal assent. This would provide time to finalize the details of building code testing and the insurance requirement that would apply to building practitioners. It will also take time to develop regulations required to implement streamlined measures. We will continue to consult with building industry stakeholders on these implementation details.

We have an opportunity to improve the building regulatory system in Ontario in ways that make sense: that improve public safety, enhance accountability and streamline the building regulatory system. The time to move forward has arrived. This legislation would improve qualifications of those involved in the building sector, improve turnaround times for building permits, make the fees for permits reflect true municipal costs and protect the consumer. But, above all, this legislation would contribute to our ongoing efforts to ensure public safety is a priority in all construction throughout Ontario.

I urge all the honourable members in this House to join me in supporting this motion.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I'm always disappointed, though not surprised, when the government brings in a time allocation motion, choking off debate, ending debate on important legislation.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Three days in a row.

Mr Bradley: The member for Kingston and the Islands points out that this has happened three days in a row. That's most unfortunate because, as people in this province will recall who have listened to me speak in the House, this Legislature did not sit from the middle of December until the middle of May. I notice in Ottawa there's a bit of hubbub arising because there's a thought that the federal Liberal government might end its session in the third or fourth week of June. That's a session, by the way, that began in January this year, so of course we know there will be a national uproar if that happens. Yet

here at Queen's Park at the provincial level we heard nothing, read nothing and saw nothing about this government being unemployed for five months, in other words, not in this Legislature and accountable to the opposition and the public for some five months.

1610

There were some passing references, I'm told—I've been corrected on this—in the odd column to the fact that the House wasn't sitting, but how many people in this province, I ask my House leader, would know that the Ontario Legislature, because of the actions of this government, on the orders of this government, did not sit from the middle of December, 2001, to the middle of May, 2002? There was no uproar, there were no columns—well, the odd reference here and there—no television stories that I remember seeing, nothing on the radio, no outrage.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Nobody cares.

Mr Bradley: The member over there says that nobody cares. Maybe he's right. Maybe the right people don't care about this. Do you know why they don't care? It's because they don't know. They don't know this happened. They have to be told this.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You've been telling them.

Mr Bradley: Some of them are aware if they watch this program, if they watch the Legislature in session, but they certainly wouldn't know it from any uproar in the news media about this.

I simply say, for the people of this province, what has happened is this: this government refused to sit, kept the House out of session in a very undemocratic way for five full months without paying any penalty at all in terms of adverse publicity, and there is not an uproar. Now they come in and they want to sit day and night, pass time allocation motions, ram everything through in the last six weeks and then tell everybody that they're governing in an accountable fashion.

Hon Mr Stockwell: We are.

Mr Bradley: I think most fair-minded people of this province would say that is not the case, despite the interjections of the government House leader, who is also the Minister of Energy, who is also the Minister of the Environment, and who simply can't hold three jobs like that, not because of lack of talent but because it's just too onerous to have one person assume those responsibilities.

The bill they're trying to ram through this afternoon reminds me of this government's attitude to public health and safety: "Let's privatize." That was, of course, part of the problem that arose in the Walkerton situation: the privatization; in that specific place and instance, the privatization of the laboratories. We had three first-class, top-notch regional laboratories in this province: one in Kingston, one in Thunder Bay and one in London. They used to do the water testing for the province of Ontario so municipalities, especially the smaller ones, could send in their water samples, have them tested and, when the results were obviously negative or bad, the local

municipality and the local medical officer of health were notified immediately.

This government was in a rush to get its tax cuts through. I know the former Speaker, now the Minister of the Environment, and the present Speaker, Mr Gary Carr—who, by the way, is being honoured this afternoon for receiving his MBA, his master of business administration degree, and we congratulate him—along with my friend Ted Arnott and a fourth member of the government caucus opposed cutting taxes until such time as they had balanced the budget. But because the Treasurer of the day, Ernie Eves, wanted to cut taxes unwisely at that time against the advice of some of his own caucus and against the advice of many people in the financial field, because they proceeded with that they had to make deeper cuts in such ministries as the Ministry of the Environment and therefore placed our water supply in this province in a riskier or more vulnerable situation, contributing to the unfortunate tragedy that occurred in Walkerton. That can be found in Judge O'Connor's report.

The government does not learn. They simply believe that a lot of these public functions, which should be in public hands, should be turned over to the private sector, in some cases, some might say with validity, putting the fox in charge of the henhouse. That has happened on many occasions.

There are areas where government should not be involved. We don't expect that governments are going to be producing automobiles. We don't expect that governments are going to be operating industries in this province. That's not what we expect from them. There are lots of areas where governments do not belong, but there are areas where they do belong and areas that should stay in the public domain, in the public sector, because the public employees represent the people of this province and not the people they're supervising. I see a trend away from public inspectors and in favour of inspections taking place by those in the private sector. As I say, in many cases it's the fox in charge of the henhouse, and that can have dire consequences for the health and safety of the people of this province.

I see another situation in my own area, and I don't know if there's a comparison, but I'm certainly going to mention it anyway just in case there's a comparison. That is where we have had downloaded to the regional municipality of Niagara the responsibility for land ambulances. That is very costly to the local municipality. There had to be a major upgrade of ambulance service when the province handed it down, and I happen to believe, by the way, that the province should be in charge of land ambulances in this province, but they decided to download it.

Unfortunately, they downloaded only part of it. In other words, they kept the central dispatch in provincial hands and the people who dispatch for the Niagara region now are people who aren't necessarily familiar with the roads in the Niagara region. There have been, I think I saw in the paper the other day—somebody can correct me—1,500 complaints the region has received. There

have been allegations that deaths have occurred because ambulances were unable to get there in an appropriate amount of time.

There is a report that was kept secret by this government for several months on ambulance services. Perhaps the member for Burlington South saw it; perhaps he didn't. I don't think he did.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): Burlington.

Mr Bradley: Burlington now. Because if he had seen it he would have wanted it released immediately, and that report in effect talked about the chaotic situation with lack of appropriate equipment, with lack of the necessary training for the employees, employees who are underpaid. The turnover was rather significant, people who are stressed out in the job. The regional municipality of Niagara has asked that if you're going to give them responsibility for land ambulances you give them responsibility for dispatch services for land ambulances and that be placed in Niagara, not outside of Niagara. I'm sure many of the other municipalities affected by this would agree.

Now you ask, why do I draw this into this particular bill? I say it because there are some people who happen to believe that the government would like to privatize that service. Perhaps their fear should be allayed by the government, but there's a fear out there that the final solution this government will have—the ultimate solution, in other words—will be the privatization of that dispatch service, and I would be very much opposed to that.

After the unfortunate incidents since September 11, 2001, I think the public started to see where it was really important to have strong public services, and the tendency to say, "If it moves, privatize it," started to fade somewhat.

Now there's another controversy going on as to whether the LCBO should be privatized or not. I happen to be opposed to that but I'll tell you there are an increasing number of people out there who say that perhaps the LCBO should be privatized because of the way they're treating some people in the wine industry. We've had some recent developments that may be helpful in this regard, but I certainly worry about that.

But the point I want to make before I sit down and yield the floor to someone else in the House is that I think it's important that we not pass legislation of this kind. I wish there were a longer debate to be had on this particular piece of legislation. Unfortunately, the debate is being choked off, shut down, closed down by this government once again in the most undemocratic fashion.

1620

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I rise today to speak against the motion, which is in effect a motion of closure. It is a motion to stop debate. It is a motion to ram through legislation without hearing the very people who are going to be impacted by this legislation.

As a municipal politician for many years before coming into this House, it was an area in which I had the

opportunity to deal with a great many people, a great many very good people, who worked for the municipality and for many municipalities, who were involved in looking after the building code, both those who looked at the plans and those who went out to the site. In those 13 years, in that entire 13-year period, I have to tell you that although there was the odd complaint from time to time from people, either in the industry or homeowners, that their plans were being delayed or that they didn't like what the men and women were saying who were going out to the construction sites, in all of that time, the decisions they made were justifiable. In all of that time what they were doing was right to protect the health and safety of the people whose property it was, but more importantly what they were doing was protecting the community standard. They were protecting the neighbourhood. They were protecting the neighbours.

The problem that I think the government sees here is a problem mostly of timing. There has been some talk of privatization here, and granted, that flows throughout almost everything this government tries to do. But there is a problem here of timing. How long does it take to get a building permit? How long does it take someone to be on the site to look to see whether the construction is valid? That is not going to be remedied, with the greatest of respect, by this particular bill.

There's an old adage about Canada that there are only two seasons: there is winter and there is construction. Really, nothing much happens by way of construction in the winter. The rest of it happens, really, from the first nice few days of spring right through to the final cold days of the fall. It is in that period that most construction takes place, and it is also in that period where people get the idea that they want to have their plans authorized, they want to have them looked at, they want the building to immediately go up, they want their deck to be built, they want the 101 things to be done, usually between the months of April and November. The problem has always been, and probably will continue to be, that because most people, most developers, most homeowners want immediate attention, they do not plan far enough in advance to allow municipalities and the workers who know what they're doing an opportunity to deal with it.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Nobody does that, Michael.

Mr Prue: Yes, yes. They do not give them that opportunity. In most municipalities in the GTA, where I had the privilege of being the mayor of one of them, people would come in and would not give that opportunity. Most of the municipalities had a problem because they could not deal with the sudden influx of work that came in April, May and June and the high expectations that came with it. Those expectations could easily have been met by the existing staff had people given longer time frames for their expectations.

But the workers struggled, on and continue to struggle on, to provide the very best they could. Municipalities were in a bind and continue to be in a bind. Do you staff up for the highest period and then lay off all your staff in

the winter? That's pretty poor planning. Or do you have a constant, that you try to get the work done into the months when there isn't much construction going and when the demand falls? That's what most of them have tried to do.

What this bill is intended to do, I think from the look of it, is to provide a whole bunch of summer jobs to people who are RCAs, or registered code agencies, a whole bunch of summer jobs so that people can go in and instantaneously get their building permit, a whole bunch of summer jobs so that the men and women who are registered code agents can go out and say, "I think we can pass this," or "We can do this," or "I'll be out to your construction site in five minutes."

I am very worried about this. I am very worried, because you are going to be taking the jobs away from dedicated professionals who have spent years learning their trade and you're going to give them out to anyone who can pass a test.

I'm not sure how good this test is going to be, and surely it's not contained in the body of the act, but I want to tell you that the people who work there now are professionals. Ask any mayor, ask any councillor in this entire province how many times the men and women who work for them doing building permits are called to court. Ask how many times their decisions are turned over—hardly ever. Ask how many times they have been sued successfully, how many times anything has gone wrong, and they will tell you they are absolutely satisfied with the mandated services they provide.

Mr Marchese: So why would they want to change the system?

Mr Prue: Nobody knows, except that some people are impatient.

What has resulted in this province is that over the years the safety of the homes, the safety of the decks that are built, the safety of the electrical work, the safety of the heating, the safety of the environment when it comes to building at or near some of our valleys and ravines have all been protected because the people who are there know the system.

What is most important and I think what is sometimes forgotten is that the people who work for the individual municipalities know not only the building code but they know the zoning bylaws, the planning provisions, the conservation authority guidelines for their respective municipalities. People who are going to hang out a shingle and become registered code agencies had better specialize too. There is nothing in this bill. People will go wherever the work is, people will go wherever they are hired, and they may not necessarily have the expertise of the home-grown talent.

I want to tell you the problems that I see with this bill, having worked there for some 13 years. One of them is that the bill will grant quicker approvals. There is no doubt that if you're going out to hire someone who is going to turn it around in eight or 20 days, you are going to get quicker approvals. You are going to pay that person to give you quick approval. But in the end, it will

come, potentially, and I think probably more times than it does now, at the expense of public safety. It's going to come at the expense of putting your life at risk, your family's life at risk or your immediate neighbours at risk.

We have seen a very devastating fire in East York this past week. Luckily no one was killed, but one house went up and six of them side by side went up. They went up not because of the building code of today but because of the building code of 40 or 50 years ago when those homes were built.

It is essential that we use the best possible standards and it is important that the public safety we all rely on in this province is maintained throughout. We do not need a hockey rink to collapse on the heads of the people who are there enjoying a hockey game. We do not need a fire to burn down an apartment building because the required safety measures and the fire doors have not been installed. We do not need to see buildings fall down before their time or be subject to wear and tear which would not have happened had the proper care been taken.

I see a second problem here too, and that is the limiting of the building permit fees. The limiting of the building permit fees is going to cause some considerable problem to the municipalities. I think the government sees contracting out as a way for the municipalities to limit their costs, but it will also, I would suggest to you, limit the construction inspection. It will limit the amount of work that these RCAs are doing on the site. It will not allow for good construction inspection.

There is a third problem with the bill. Nowhere in the bill does it contain anything about the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This is an essential thing that needs to be remedied. It needs to be talked about. It is not in the present building code. I sat here through what seemed interminable debate over the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and all the laudatory things that were said by the government members. Surely we need an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, but we need one with some teeth. We need it to be able to help those people in our community who rely on buildings, who rely on building inspectors, and there's nothing here. There is nothing here that will give any comfort that the government is listening to them or that the building inspector will be mindful of what they are to do. There is nothing in here that will allow the registered code agencies any latitude, nothing for people who are disabled, or community standards for the disabled, or anything under that act. There is nothing that will say that it could be overridden in any way in support of what they need to function fully in this society.

1630

There is an absolute dearth of provisions in this act for anything to do with energy efficiency. There is nothing there. This province may or may not sign on with the federal government to the Kyoto accord. There was very good work done by all parties in this Legislature in the last week or so on alternative fuels, but there is nothing in this bill that will do anything for energy efficiency or anything related to energy efficiency in Ontario. There is simply nothing there. There was an opportunity in this

bill to address that and nothing has been done, and now we have closure.

Getting back to registered code agencies, there is much talk about contracting out. Contracting out is a very serious issue. This government seems to want to do it more times than not. It even wants to do it in light of Walkerton and other problems that have surfaced, when the private sector or those who are not properly trained or accredited go out to do the work more cheaply than those who are properly trained and dedicated to the task.

Much work is already contracted out by municipalities. A great many of them contract out work, and that is not necessarily bad. In East York, where I was the mayor, we contracted out some of that work. We had building code officers and people who went and looked very carefully at the plans and the construction sites, but we did not have all of the staff that a big city like Toronto or some other cities in the province might have. Some of the work was contracted out but it was contracted out by our chief building official and reported to our chief building official. That was a very real difference. This is not going to be to and by the chief building official or to and by the staff of the respective municipalities.

We contracted out heating and cooling because it was important to have experts and engineers who could comment on that. We contracted out the auditing provisions from time to time, when individuals had to be audited to see whether they were doing the correct documentation and observation under the code. Once in a while we contracted out complex electrical systems in the building of factories and multi-residential developments, because it was very complex and sometimes beyond the scope of even some of our building officials.

But the problem this creates is that it contracts it out to individuals who haven't passed a test and who may not have that expertise. Most importantly, it does not allow the chief building officials to have a say or to reject what is being done. That is a very real problem that's going to come back to haunt this government. The chief building official has been cut out of the whole process, unless and until such time as a stop-work order is put on. That is the only time they are going to have a handle on this. It has taken away the municipal guarantee of safety. It has taken away the municipal guarantee that when someone buys a house or moves into a new apartment, it was properly inspected. It takes away that guarantee, save and except for the seven years that one might be able to sue a registered code agent. Thereafter, in my reading of the bill, I don't think it contains anything at all.

The problem here as well is that these registered code agents are for hire. There's nothing wrong with putting out a shingle that you are for hire to do any number of things. Surely in this province and this country one can hang out a shingle, with virtually no experience, to be an immigration consultant or to go into court to argue traffic tickets. One would say, how much experience are these RCAs going to have under the building code? They'll have to pass a test. Will they have to have two, five or 10 years of experience? No, they won't. They won't have to

have any experience at all. They will have to have studied the manuals, they will have to pass the test, and they can literally go out that day and put their name for hire. They will in many cases be unsupervised.

They will be hired by people who want fast service, not necessarily good service. If they want a reputation for doing things quickly and they go on to a construction site where homes are being built, I can guarantee you what they're going to do: they're going to do it as quickly as they possibly can. They're going to approve it in a flash. They're going to work along with the contractor and the developer and they're going to turn a blind eye to small problems. They're not going to issue stop-work orders and they're not going to do the kinds of things that involve the municipality. And they're going to put their seal on it in the end.

They want that because they want the reputation of being fast. They want to be hired and rehired by the development community. They want to be hired and rehired by people who want fast service. They will want the extra work. They are not going to do things that in any way impugn or stop or slow down that process. That is what people who work in the public service must do from time to time to ensure safety. They will not be supervised. This is a huge problem. It is absolutely enormous.

Presently, in all municipalities of any size at all—and I can't speak for the little tiny ones—there is a chief building official, and below the chief building official are a number of building agents who work for the chief building official and who must report to him or her. Often there are people above that. There can be commissioners, there can be chief administrative officers. There is a whole chain of command to make sure that the people below you are doing the right thing, that they are supervised, that they are looked at if they do the wrong thing, and then the appropriate measures are taken to train them or discipline them. There will be none of that here. This will be unsupervised work. This will be people who are doing it quickly, who are doing it to make a reputation, who are doing it unsupervised.

You have another huge problem, and that's the time frames. This is designed to speed everything up to the point that an application can be made and approved in eight days and someone can be on the site and pass everything as it's being done, lickety-split, right there. It may be a boon to the construction industry and to the developers, but I will tell you, it is the time frames and not the costs that are behind this.

Unreasonable expectations are being put forward in this bill that municipalities cannot possibly meet. They are going to be forced in turn to go out and hire these people and they are going to be forced to hire them in the non-winter months. It is the time frames. How can anyone look at some of the extensive plans for building homes in eight days? How can anyone look at factories or big apartment buildings in 20 days, and look at everything that has to be done? You have to look at the code, you have to look at zoning, you have to look at

planning, you have to look at the fire code, you have to look at the conservation authority. You have to do everything and you have to be a policeman for the act. Someone who is hired by whoever wants something done can hardly be expected to police the act.

We have the whole huge problem of municipalities here; that is, what are municipalities going to have to do under this act? They are going to have to refund the costs of whatever RCAs are hired by developers, citizens or whoever, from the fees that they charge. I don't know what the limit is here—I could not see it, but perhaps better minds than mine can look at that—but they're going to have to take money from their coffers that they normally charge for this service and pay outside agents to do it. They are going to have to find the money from somewhere, and none of that is contained within the act.

They cannot charge more than is reasonable for costs. I understand what the courts have said about this. I have read the court judgments and I understand the government may be in a small bit of a bind related to this, but they cannot charge more than what is reasonable for the costs. Municipalities have a lot of costs which we will not see directly from the building code agents: costs related to interpretations; legal fees; costs related to zoning and planning; costs related to the whole plethora of government agencies with whom they must consult, from fire departments to the police to the conservation authority to the boards of health—everyone they would normally contact. There are costs there and it is not reasonable that they may have to have their costs cut. I'm not sure how much that is. I clearly can't see that anywhere in the act. I suppose it may be contained in the regulations, but I haven't heard anything in the debate yet that describes that. That causes me some very real concern for the municipalities of this province.

1640

They are going to have to prepare yearly reports. Here's more bureaucracy, but where does the bureaucracy fall? Not on the developers. It falls on the cities. It falls on the poor cities that are already struggling to make ends meet, that don't have the revenues to hire people to prepare yearly reports to some provincial bureaucrat, I am sure, or to this Legislature, outlining the whole yearly report of how many RCAs were into the field and how many things were developed and how much money was spent and how much money was saved and how much money was lost and everything else.

The chief building official in the municipality, as I have already alluded to, has no veto power if he or she thinks that what is happening does not comply with the building code. I cannot see anything in the act that says a chief building official of a municipality can override an RCA. They cannot do it. What kind of legislation is this that the trust we put into the chief building official of the province, to whom all the others report—and the chief building official of each of the municipalities cannot override the decision of an RCA, who might be totally wrong, who might be incompetent, who may not be trained, who may be on his or her first day of the job.

There is nothing in here that gives that veto power, save and except when a stop-work order is put into effect. If there is no stop-work order, something can go from beginning to end without the chief building official having any say whatsoever. This, to me, is tantamount to disaster. It will result in some very real problems.

We have also the problem that the province and the municipalities are exempt from anything done by RCAs, ie, they can avoid responsibility. This is a huge one. Stop and think about it. A municipality that has had or feels they may have some problems with a building or with a building permit can quite easily get out of that by giving it away. They can absolve themselves of the responsibilities. It would be on the backs, I guess, of whoever the RCA is and whatever insurance company deems them fit to hire them. This may cause some municipalities worry about the costs associated with legal action against them or about having lawyers at all. I can understand that, as a former mayor, but it will cause them to go out to the RCAs. It will cause in this province, I am sure, insurance premiums to skyrocket for them.

This is a bill that has not been well thought out in a number of areas. Communities across this province look to their chief building officials and the people who work there to look at the plans and make sure they comply with all the municipal standards, not just the building code but all the others as well. Communities look to planners to protect them in some cases against the city, to protect them in some cases against the developers, to protect them in some cases against committees of adjustment, and probably in virtually all cases against the decisions that might end up at the Ontario Municipal Board.

I don't believe that the communities are going to expect that same kind of service from someone who is hired privately and independently to look after their best interests. Neighbourhoods that are fighting something because they believe it is wrong will not find an ally or a sympathetic ear or someone who can explain to them the nuances of the Planning Act or the nuances of the building code or the nuances of the Conservation Act. They find that now in their officials within city hall; they will not find it with the RCAs.

We're talking about closure and we're talking about, I guess, the government wanting to ram this through. It is a very sad day that this is being done, because organizations like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario have a number of amendments they would have wanted to make. There are many people who want to speak to this bill, if not to completely derail it, at least to make some major changes to it so that it will work for every citizen and every municipality. They are not being given the opportunity to do that.

In the 20 minutes or so I have stood here, I have tried to explain what I see as some of the major faults of this bill. I'm not saying everything in the bill is bad, because very few bills are totally bad, but there are enough things in here that require a sober second thought from the community and the community leaders, from the municipalities this will affect to the health and safety of ordin-

ary neighbourhoods. You should have done a better job than to ram this through on third reading. If this unfolds as almost everything else unfolds in this House and this passes in a couple of days, I hope somebody in the government begins work immediately with the municipalities of Ontario and with all of the stakeholders to start bringing in some legislation and amendments to make this bill what it should be, and that is to the benefit of the people of this province.

Mr Gerretsen: I'm very pleased to speak on this matter today. Of course, once again it's a time allocation matter, which is closure. The last three times I've had an opportunity to speak in this House have been on closure motions. Three days in a row—last Thursday, yesterday and today.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Shame.

Mr Gerretsen: It is a shame because, as I pointed out to the government House leader yesterday, since this government took over in 1995, closure has been invoked 86% of the time, whereas prior to that it was less than 5% of the time. The people of Ontario should understand that closure means there can be no further debate. It also severely limits the members in the Liberal caucus in debating the issue, because the way things are set up here, we are lucky if we get five or six minutes to speak on any bill. I don't think that's too democratic. I certainly would like to see some changes to that. Having so little time and not being able to speak about what we're really talking about here, which is closure, shutting off the debate, leaves me no alternative but to speak about the bill for even the few minutes that I have.

What I find very interesting is that this is yet another bill in which the government wants to privatize good government services. You would have thought this government would have learned enough from what happened in Walkerton with the privatization of water inspection services. I know some people will say, "Well, it wasn't really the government's fault. It was the local officials who were to blame," etc. The bottom line is, there wasn't sufficient oversight, and exactly the same thing can happen in this situation.

I find it very interesting that one of the main ingredients of the bill is section 4.2, in which an applicant, in other words a builder or a developer himself, can appoint a registered code agency. It's kind of like hiring your own inspectors. You tell me how the public is protected by that. I know all sorts of reasons are given, you know, "We need to approve building plans quickly" etc, and I'm all for that. I think the way to get to that is to make sure the administrations in municipalities are run properly so that building plans can be approved in a quick, efficient and thorough manner, because, after all, time is money. There's no question about it. But do you have to put in legislation that in effect builders can appoint their own code agencies?

Let me just read to you what the Ontario Building Officials Association has to say about that. This is an association made up of the building inspectors in all our municipalities. Let me just read what they say. It says,

"Under section 4.2 of Bill 124 equivalencies can be proposed through a RCA." That's a registered code agency. "The municipality does not review plans for permit issuance and therefore any equivalencies that may impact fire services will not be known to the fire services until the project is completed. This process could impact fire suppression and life safety."

This is from an organization that is highly respected, that is involved in every one of our municipalities, our building inspectors—let me just read again the last line from their press release. It states, "This process could impact fire suppression and life safety." You would have thought that we in this province, and this government in particular, by the many actions it has taken over the last five to six years in privatizing as much as possible, would have learned by now. But apparently they haven't, because here they're at it again.

1650

I was almost going to say that one of the rules they have in the federal House is that when you want to bring in closure, the minister has to be in the House for the last hour to answer questions. I'm glad to see the minister here today, and I'm just asking her: are you prepared to answer questions about this particular bill and why you're invoking closure? Why don't we have the same rule they have federally: if a government department wants to invoke closure, the minister has to be here and has to answer questions as to why closure should be invoked? So I'm asking the minister directly, are you prepared to answer questions as to why you're invoking closure? If not, why are you invoking closure, particularly on a bill as important as this?

Let me get to the items in the bill again because I have very limited time. My whip is sitting right here and he's telling me to hurry up with the thing, but there are so many things to say. I think it is absolutely unbelievable that a bill that has something like 39 pages in it that are of great importance to the people of Ontario, that are of great importance to the municipalities—members in my caucus will in effect have four, five or six minutes to discuss it, under the closure motion that has been introduced here.

Let me get back to the AMO policy report. AMO makes a total of 33 recommendations as to changes that should be made to the bill or parts of the bill that are not accepted. I did not hear the associate minister say a word about that. Some of these recommendations are very severe. Why aren't you dealing with that?

Recommendation 1 in their policy report: "Because of the inherent conflict-of-interest and liability concerns, AMO opposes section 4.2," with respect to registered code agencies, the section I just referred to where a builder in effect can appoint his or her own inspector. They're against it. This section should be removed from the bill.

Another section, recommendation 6 of their report: "The government should not 'over-regulate' what building permit fees are charged by municipalities. The new Municipal Act establishes a framework for determining fees, so there is no need for a second set of regulations or

for provincial micromanagement," and that's exactly what is happening here.

There are a whole bunch of issues where all of a sudden the big province again knows better than the local municipalities.

It says that you can only collect permit fees that reflect the cost of service delivery. Who is better to know that than the local municipalities?

It talks about holding a public meeting before any changes are made to building permit fees. I would say that most municipalities that are conscious of what they're doing are already doing that.

It says it should establish a code of conduct for building inspectors. Surely most municipalities are already doing that, and I could go on and on.

Here is Big Brother province once again telling our municipalities what to do. But this AMO report says, "Don't do it. We know what our obligations are." You don't have to legislate in this particular area.

There are 33 of these recommendations. Let me just pick up on a couple of others.

Number 18: "The issues of when a building is complete and when the municipality is notified needs to be resolved." That's a rather important one. If there's nothing in the legislation that talks about when a building is actually completed, at what stage it is completed, surely that has to be rectified.

Next, number 20: "Municipalities must have the power to limit the scope of work performed by the RCAs." In other words, if a registered code agency has been appointed, you cannot limit the scope, or a municipality does not have the right to limit the scope, of that particular agency. It is absolutely ludicrous that this government couldn't even get that right in their legislation, as the AMO report sets out.

Interjection.

Mr Gerretsen: Yes, Acting Speaker, you will get your chance during your time.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): What number was that?

Mr Gerretsen: What number is that? That's number 20.

Interjection.

Mr Gerretsen: Oh yes. I'll get to one more, and then we'll get to the amendment. "Municipalities should be allowed to regulate 'home renovators,' who should be better defined in legislation/regulation." Why don't you do something meaningful and deal with the concerns of AMO? Don't come into this House and say you've talked to your stakeholders and they're all on side, because they're not on side. There are 33 recommendations here that you have not enacted in your legislation.

So it is with that in mind that I move an amendment to government motion number 12, which we are debating right now and which is the time allocation motion with respect to Bill 124, as follows: that the first paragraph be amended by adding the following after the last word: "At such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing

committee on general government" and the third paragraph be deleted.

I so move this amendment. I'm giving it to our page Lisa. Oh, they have to have two of them. Here's another one.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Gerretsen has moved an amendment.

Mr Gerretsen: With that, Speaker, I yield the floor.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I see that our member has arrived, so that was my part of the debate.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I only want a couple of minutes to make reference to an issue that took place back in April 2000, and to remind the government on the other side that what they did back then came back to haunt us now, and what they're doing now with Bill 124 is going to haunt us later. So here goes just a piece of history. Maybe they'd better pay attention carefully to what they've done.

In April 2000, I wrote a letter to the Minister for Community and Social Services—who at that time was Mr Runciman—and, in a nutshell, outlined a concern about the creation of the TSSA in Bill 42. There were concerns raised by one of my constituents who runs these devices about the qualifications and certification of the inspectors. Basically, under previous Minister Tsubouchi, with the TSSA—his response to me was, "Regarding your constituent's concerns of professional qualifications, I'm pleased to inform him that nearly half of the staff in the elevating and amusement devices division have been certified." He was basically taking great pride in the fact that 50% of the inspectors of those rides, after it was privatized and sent away from the public domain, were not certified. He was very proud of that fact—oh, I'm sorry, he said he was happy that they were certified. Well, that means 50% weren't. Unfortunately, this came back to haunt us in my own riding, where a very good friend of mine, Ross and Chris Ensley's daughter, who was a tremendously budding athlete, was seriously, seriously injured in an amusement device that was inspected by one of the 50% that weren't certified.

Quite frankly, I just want to make the point that in Bill 124 we've got this push toward privatization that literally scares me. We've had example after example since 1995 of this government jumping into privatizing a lot of the services that are being offered. Need I remind you about Walkerton? Need I remind you again, for about the fifth time in this House, about the TSSA having 50% of its people not certified to inspect these devices? We're going to have it happen again.

Unfortunately, the government's not listening, because we've got AMO, which is saying that 33 recommendations to improve the circumstances this bill falls under should be looked at and seriously considered. I'm quite concerned that this government's first claim to fame, as all of the members on the other side are prone to do, immediately talking about this bill—it's about safety and security. The first thing out of their mouth is safety and

security, but back in 2000—since that time, 2000, I've talked about this amusement devices apparatus. I'm quite concerned that it's not happening.

1700

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I'm pleased to speak to Bill 124, for all of eight minutes and nine seconds.

Let me first begin by addressing the issue that's immediately in front of us, and that of course is the matter of time allocation. This is a huge deal. This is one of those things that unless you're either in the business or you've spent time at the municipal level, have some exposure to fully appreciate just how important and how significant the whole process of enforcing and interpreting the building code is—of course, that's a document that has evolved over years and years, and quite frankly the code often reflects horrible tragedies, people who have died because building codes weren't modernized at the time and they weren't up to speed, they didn't have the standards that they should have, and therefore there were coroners' inquests or other judicial reviews and it was found that in the application of the public interest and public safety the rules weren't what they should be.

This is not a minor matter, and now to find out that the government has no intention of letting the public speak to it—I mean, tell me, all of this is about municipalities, it's about people who develop and build things or redevelop in municipalities, it's municipalities that are empowered by this august body to be responsible for enforcing the building code. All the activity happens on the ground in communities. Not one municipal representative is going to get word one. Don't you think there might just perhaps be the odd mayor or councillor or alderman who wants to have something to say about this? How about municipalities that ask their chief building inspector to go in front of a legislative committee and express the concerns that a given municipality might have?

It's outrageous, if you stand back and think about it, that you would make a significant change, a significant departure in the way that we interpret and enforce the building code, and not one municipal representative gets a say.

I'm advised by our critic, the member for Beaches-East York, Michael Prue, that there are no fewer than 30—I believe it's 33 amendments that AMO would like to see. AMO, of course, is the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. They are exactly the body that you should be talking to. Their whole *raison d'être*, the reason they exist, is so that the interests of municipalities, big and small, can be focused into one body and then the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Premier and others who have responsibility for municipal matters know whom to deal with—one-stop shopping, if you will—in terms of finding out what municipalities think.

They've got 33 amendments. Would I support all 33? I don't know; I haven't heard what the amendments are. But more importantly, neither has the government, and you've got the power. How can any of you here today leave this chamber and defend the fact that you're going

to give your vote to ram through a brand new law that has major implications for the public safety of the people of Ontario and nobody gets a say? It's outrageous.

Unfortunately, it's also business as usual. How many environmental laws have we seen come through here where no one got a say; how many labour law changes where nobody got a say; how many other changes to transportation and services and programs that you've hacked and slashed and burned and eliminated and nobody got word one?

Here we are, dealing with the very lives of Ontarians, and the people who are elected—they're not your minions; they're elected representatives in their own right—get no say. It's shameful and, at the very least, it's bad law-making. That's not the way to make and create and pass good law. It's insulting.

In the couple of minutes I've got left I want to focus on one thing, two if I have time. One thing is this whole notion that any increases in fees have to go to a public meeting. Fair enough. Business investment is important in all of our respective communities, and we all spend a lot of time and effort trying to entice business into our municipalities, for obvious reasons. It helps with the assessment base. It also provides jobs so that our young people don't leave our community, because all of us like to see our communities continue, as much as we can, with those who were born and raised there, and then continue to add through what they have to contribute as an adult.

But they aren't the only thing that matters in a municipality, and to say that if we're going to increase fees for developers and business interests and contractors, it has to go to a public meeting, how come that's not good enough for any increases in library fees? That's my point. It's not whether or not this is a good idea in and of itself, that the public will be given an opportunity to have input—unlike what you provided the municipalities, I might remind you. But you're going to give those developers and contractors a public hearing before any fees could be increased by the municipality.

If you think—and I'm not so sure—that's the way we ought to go, first of all, you ought to follow your own bloody advice and do it yourself. Secondly, I'd like to hear one of you defend why library services aren't that important, a cornerstone of democracy. For a lot of families who are financially challenged, libraries are the only hope that a lot of students have to get access to the kind of information they need in order to grab that one big hope that all young people have, and that is a good education.

If those fees are going to be increased or, more importantly, if those services are going to be curtailed because of downloading by this government, if municipal councils decide they're not going to open libraries on Sunday, how come that doesn't have to go to a public meeting? How about those kids who are in inner cities and the only relief they get from global warming, from the kind of summers we're now having, is to go to the local recreation centre and use the local pool? That

means an awful lot to young children and families and parents who want to make sure their kids have as good a summer as they can get.

And yet again, because of downloading and other things, there is not enough money to maintain the municipal recreation centres and the municipal pools, and so there's either an increase in the user fee or a decrease in access to the service. Where is the public meeting for that? Isn't that just as important as a developer doing a multi-million dollar project, where they're going to make multiple millions of dollars in profit? They get to hear what their costs are going to be, and yet those poor kids, whether it's the recreation centre or library or public health services or programs for the disabled, don't get a say. What hypocrisy, I say to the government members.

The Acting Speaker: Order. I think you might want to withdraw the word "hypocrisy."

Mr Christopherson: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Caplan: I am pleased to speak to the time allocation motion, but it's surprising that members of the government don't seem to want to debate their own motion. So I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a half-hour bell.

The division bells rang from 1709 to 1739.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Caplan has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will please stand.

All those opposed will please stand.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 24; the nays are 49.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The member for Don Valley East.

Mr Caplan: In the short amount of time I have, I wish to move an amendment to the amendment that was proposed by my colleague.

I move an amendment to the amendment to the government notice of motion 12 that the sentence "that the third paragraph be deleted" be replaced with "that the fourth paragraph be deleted."

This particular time allocation motion is especially odious. It removes third reading debate, first of all. It also removes any ability for the committees to be able to look at any amendments and pass any amendments. I've already put the government on notice that I intend to introduce several substantive amendments to strengthen Bill 124.

Applause.

Mr Caplan: Well, thank you.

It is the job of legislators in this House to consider bills, to amend them as necessary, to make them better. The government seems intent on wanting to prevent all members of this House from having that ability, and it's particularly odious.

I hope that members of this House will support the amendments I have made, that my colleague Mr Gerretsen has made to Bill 124 to allow for some committee time, just one or two hours, to be able to strengthen Bill 124. It could be a bill that we can all support.

I say to members of the government, it was based upon the Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group, a very good consultation, an industry-wide consultation. Many things that BRRAG recommended were not put in the bill. Many things that were in BRRAG that were rejected were put in the bill. I have a question for the government: why did you do that? Why didn't you accept your own expert panel's advice to put in certain things that would ensure public safety, ensure efficiency and streamlining when it came to building permits?

In fact, the Ontario Building Officials Association say very clearly that Bill 124 in its current form is a hazard to public safety as far as fire services. I would quote from their letter. It says, "Most municipalities rely on ... fire ... staff for plans review and inspections related to fire safety for all buildings. Under Bill 124 all fire services personnel currently carrying out this function will be required to pass assessment exams in order to be qualified."

Here's the operative section. "Under section 4.2"—the registered code agency section—"of Bill 124 equivalencies can be proposed through an RCA. The municipality does not review plans for permit issuance and therefore any equivalencies that may impact fire services will not be known to the fire services until the project is completed. This process could"—and I would say "will"—"impact fire suppression and life safety."

These are serious matters, matters of public safety. The government should take them seriously. Even in today's debate, the government was unwilling to put up anyone except the minister, who only gave us, frankly, half-truths. She would not answer any questions. They would not put up one speaker to speak to Bill 124 or the time allocation motion, which is a real shame.

That leads me to conclude that the government is afraid to debate this bill and the government is afraid to debate amendments. The government does not have public safety at heart.

Interjection.

Mr Caplan: That's right. They have abdicated their responsibility. With that in mind, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a half-hour bell.

The division bells rang from 1746 to 1816.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Caplan has moved adjournment of the debate. All those in favour will please stand.

All those opposed will please stand.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 26; the nays are 46.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It being past 10 after 6 of the clock, I am required to place the question.

Mr Caplan has moved an amendment to government notice of motion 12, that the sentence "that the third paragraph be deleted" be replaced with "that the fourth paragraph be deleted."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1818 to 1828.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Bartolucci, Rick	Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Marchese, Rosario
Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martin, Tony
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Newman, Dan
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Kells, Morley	Sampson, Rob
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Galt, Doug	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Gilchrist, Steve	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Hardeman, Ernie	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Hastings, John	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hodgson, Chris	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
	Young, David	Young, David

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 26; the nays are 42.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr Gerretsen has moved that government notice of motion 12 be amended as follows:

"That the first paragraph be amended by adding the following after the last word, 'At such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government,' and that the third paragraph be deleted."

Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1832 to 1842.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Bartolucci, Rick	Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Marchese, Rosario
Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martin, Tony
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Johns, Helen	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Kells, Morley	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Clark, Brad	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Hastings, John	Young, David	Young, David
Hodgson, Chris		

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 27; the nays are 43.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mrs Molinari has moved government notice of motion number 12. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1846 to 1856.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Johns, Helen	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
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Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hastings, John	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Hodgson, Chris	Young, David	Young, David
Hudak, Tim		

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	Levac, David

Bisson, Gilles
Bountrogianni, Marie
Boyer, Claudette
Bradley, James J.
Caplan, David
Christopherson, David
Cleary, John C.

Dombrowsky, Leona
Duncan, Dwight
Gerretsen, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoy, Pat
Kennedy, Gerard
Kormos, Peter

Marchese, Rosario
Martin, Tony
Patten, Richard
Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramsay, David

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being well past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 44; the nays are 27.

The House adjourned at 1858.

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of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
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Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 12 June 2002

Mercredi 12 juin 2002



**Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers**

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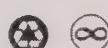
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 12 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 12 juin 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): The BIO 2002 convention being held in Toronto has attracted over 14,000 biotechnology scientists, executives and policy leaders representing 45 countries. BIO 2002 is covering such topics as religion and biotechnology, bioethics and the boardroom, biodefence and security, and intellectual property.

The Canadian biotechnology industry mushroomed in the 1990s. Revenues are projected to surpass \$5 billion in 2002, up from \$1.9 billion in 1999. Exports will grow to nearly \$1.7 billion.

Canada is home to 358 biotechnology companies, the second-greatest number in the world. Some 40% of all Canadian biotechnology companies work in the health care sector. Over 67,000 people are employed by biotechnology companies, and employment forecasts expect 10% growth per year.

On every continent, including Antarctica, and even in outer space, researchers are using biotechnology. The technological breakthroughs of recent years have had far-ranging effects on health care, diagnostics, nutrition, agriculture and industry, and have convinced the world that biotechnology is paving the way to an exciting future in which individualized medicine, early intervention, healthier foods, pest-resistant crops, bio-based fuels and environmentally friendly industrial processes reign supreme.

There are numerous and considerable challenges ahead, but there is no doubt that biotechs will play a major role in Ontario's economy.

GOLDEN JUBILEE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I pay tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during her 50th year on the throne. On June 2, I attended a Golden Jubilee Sunday. It was held at Simcoe's St Paul's Presbyterian Church, a service conducted by Rev John Cruickshank.

February 6, 1952, is an important day in Canadian history. It marks the accession of Her Majesty Queen

Elizabeth II and the beginning of a very special relationship between Canada and its new Queen. Over the past 50 years, Her Majesty has maintained a very visible and significant presence in Canada and has been witness to many historic occasions.

While much has changed in our royal relationship since 1952, our Queen obviously plays a significant role in the lives of all of us. Here at Queen's Park, the imprint of Her Majesty can be witnessed all around. Our newly named Lieutenant Governor, James Bartleman, is the next in a long line of proud representatives of the Queen in Ontario.

This fall, Golden Jubilee celebrations will see Queen Elizabeth visit communities both large and small across the province. I encourage the people of this province to celebrate Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee. She is our Queen.

God save the Queen.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Last week, the Premier went to Guelph, supposedly to listen to and consult with provincial leaders in agriculture and agribusiness. You know what, though? He didn't do that. Instead, he turned around and gave them a lecture. The Premier said that the days of looking to government cheques as the only answer are over and that farmers need to get their act together. This government needs to get its act together.

A year and a half ago, you promised our farmers a made-in-Ontario safety net program. The proposal was agreed to in principle one year ago—last June—but you've yet to deliver on that promise. The message coming out of agriculture has been clear and consistent for the last several years and farmers are outraged at your latest insult. Stephen Thompson, who farms a few thousand acres in Huron county, says, "You promised the program. You need to deliver the program." Jeff Ferguson, a farmer outside of St Thomas, says, "I'm appalled by your attitude. I don't believe farmers ever asked you to cure all their ills."

To adopt an agricultural vision for the long term, this government must deal with the crisis facing the agricultural community today. In next Monday's budget, our farmers want to see that made-in-Ontario safety net program with all the necessary funding in place.

The Premier needs to take some leadership and make up his mind. Either he's going to sit back and watch agriculture wither away or he's going to act unilaterally

for the good of our farmers. I'm calling on this Premier to get his act together. Stop blaming farmers for global problems beyond their control and table the much-anticipated made-in-Ontario safety net program now.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): Encore une autre fois, je me trouve obligé comme francophone et député francophone de venir à cette Assemblée pour dire qu'encore le gouvernement oublie les services en français pour les francophones.

Imaginez ma surprise l'autre jour quand j'ai reçu une invitation de notre ministre M. Baird, qui s'appelle le ministre responsable des affaires francophones, une belle invitation pour aller au premier anniversaire de l'adoption du drapeau franco-ontarien qu'on va avoir ici la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Laissez-moi lire l'invitation que j'ai eue de mon ministre délégué aux affaires francophones :

"The minister responsible for francophone affairs, the Honourable John Baird, invites you to celebrate the first anniversary..." blah, blah.

On pense que le ministre aurait au moins assez d'intelligence d'envoyer aux députés francophones de cette Assemblée une invitation en français en non en anglais. Ça démontre à quel point ce gouvernement oublie—and je répète, oublie—les services qu'ils sont obligés à donner aux Franco-Ontariens et leur complet dédain pour les services en français.

Je dis simplement ceci au ministre : en tout cas, au nom de tous les francophones de cette province, je demande au ministre des excuses officielles. Je veux bien assister à cette célébration, mais s'il vous plaît, monsieur le Ministre, envoyez-moi une invitation en français.

CAMBRIDGE SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): More good news from Cambridge. I rise today to join the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame and Cambridge families in recognizing the great accomplishments of local athletes and team builders.

On Saturday May 4, 2002, the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame officially inducted intercounty baseball legend Wray Upper, NHL great Jim Schoenfeld, skating pairs Katherine Matousek and Lloyd Eisler, horseman William Wellwood and junior golf executives Joyce and Jack Leggat. Cambridge families and I are proud of these athletes and team builders. They are a true example of dedication and commitment in their chosen area of sport and an excellent role model for youth.

I would like to congratulate Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame co-chairs Cam Allan and Al Findley who, along with others, will soon celebrate the hall of fame's expansion from a 200-square-foot to a 2,000-square-foot venue at the Cambridge Centre shopping complex. May I extend my best wishes to volunteers at the Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame. This organization will soon realize

its goal of becoming the best municipal sports hall of fame in Canada.

1340

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): With regret I bring yet another announcement to this Legislature of yet another program cut at London Health Sciences Centre.

Dr Grace takes on the most high-risk, extremely obese patients for gastroplasty and gastric bypass. This bariatric surgery, or stomach stapling, is barely available anywhere in Ontario. He receives five to 10 calls per week and now he knows there is nowhere else to send these patients. Of the nine surgeons who perform this surgery in Ontario—seen as the last hope for obese people—six are taking no new patients. The remaining three have waits of up to two years.

The number of obese people in Ontario is growing, and this last resort must be available to them. These people suffer from hypertension, respiratory problems, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. This procedure saves lives.

I'm asking the Minister of Health to have this program reinstated. This cut is about saving money. This program ought to be about saving lives. I ask the minister, if you don't reinstate the program because you know that people want and need to be healthier, then you must reinstate the program because of the enormous savings to the health care system once these people are well. I ask the minister again, have this program reinstated at the London Health Sciences Centre.

EVENTS IN DURHAM

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Members' statements? The member for Durham.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Thank you, Mr Speaker—and the most educated Speaker, I might say.

I'd like to rise in the House to pay tribute to some of the young people of my riding and the accomplishments they've achieved.

First I would like to mention the Darlington under-18 boys' soccer team and the Darlington under-16 team, who both will attend the Gothia Cup in Sweden this summer. This is an excellent opportunity for travel and international soccer experience. Darlington will be among 1,200 teams participating in one of the world's largest youth soccer tournaments. I'd like to congratulate Jim Potter, coach of the under-16 team, and Dave Staley, coach of the under-18 team of Darlington. I'm sure we wish the parents, coaching staff and players success in their trip and on the field.

Moving to a different field, I would like to pay tribute to the music students at Cartwright High School and Bowmanville High School for their success in competitions this past spring.

Bowmanville High School attended the Heritage International Music Festival in Montreal. The students achieved the following results: gold medal and first place in senior band, gold medal and first place in senior choir, silver medal and first place in women's chorus, and silver medal for the jazz band. I'd like to commend the BHS music students for their achievement and also pay tribute to the hard work of the band parents' association as well as their teacher-conductors Shawn Hills, Kevin Chocorlan and Michael Menheere.

Finally, congratulations are in order to Cartwright High School, under the direction of teacher John Beirness. The Cartwright band achieved gold in Quebec City.

Durham is proud of the accomplishments of our young people. We're happy to share and celebrate their success with the members of the House today.

PHILIPPINES INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party, I rise to pay special tribute to those Filipino Canadians who are here today and joining us, because they are celebrating the 104th anniversary of Philippine independence.

Applause.

Mr Ruprecht: Thank you. When we see the Filipino flag, we honour a nation and a people who had to fight with every ounce of their strength against tyranny and the yoke of dictatorship. Even in this generation of Filipino Canadians, every Filipino who has reached at least 20 years of age will remember that the battle scars against tyranny and dictatorship are on their backs, and to them we owe a great deal of gratitude.

What do these Filipino Canadians really want? They want nothing else but to structure their own future. They want nothing else but to determine their own destiny. They want nothing else but to maintain that the torch of freedom is being passed on from this generation to the next.

So we know that together, when they come to Canada, we can raise the flag, we can raise the standard. We say to these Canadians of Filipino background, Mabuhay ang Filipinas. Long live Philippines. Long live Canada. Long live freedom and long live democracy.

BIRR UNITED CHURCH

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise today to congratulate Birr United Church in, of course, beautiful downtown Birr, Ontario—the member for Scarborough-Agincourt will know exactly where it is in county Middlesex—on its 100th anniversary.

On June 3, 1902, a cornerstone-laying ceremony was held. It was attended by members of the community and the church congregation. The ceremony was also attended by Sir Adam Beck. The total cost of the building and horse shed was about \$4,000.

A special worship service and celebration was held two Sundays ago along with a ceremonial rededication of the church building.

Over the past several years, the congregation of the Birr United Church has been working hard to renovate and restore the church. A new roof has been installed and the exterior trim has been painted. Plaster has been repaired, windows reglazed, the sanctuary has been given a fresh coat of paint and much of the woodwork has been refinished. Many of the windows have also been uncovered and refurbished.

I want to commend the anniversary chairperson, Ken White, and Reverend Bill McAuslan for their hard work and commitment to make this event a great success. I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of the friends and the parishioners of Birr United Church for taking pride in their church, for helping to ensure that the church endures another 100 years. Please join me in recognizing Birr United Church on their 100th anniversary.

ANNUAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2001 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

COMMISSIONERS OF ESTATE BILLS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I also beg to inform the House that the Clerk received a favourable report from the Commissioners of Estate Bills with respect to Bill Pr5, An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital.

Accordingly, pursuant to standing order 86(e), the bill and the report stand referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 18

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Yesterday, the chief government whip raised a point of order concerning Bill 118, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 to require annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support payments, standing in the name of the member for Sault Ste Marie, Mr Martin.

The chief government whip contended that Bill 118 contravenes standing order 56 because it would require the expenditure of public funds.

I have carefully reviewed the chief government whip's comments, and both Bill 118 and the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, which Bill 118 seeks to amend.

At first glance, Bill 118 would appear to require money to be spent by indexing support payments to the cost of living. However, the bill must be read in the wider context of the parent act it amends.

The bill, if passed, would permit, not compel, the Lieutenant Governor in Council—the cabinet—to make a regulation which, if made, would constitute a charge on the consolidated revenue fund.

The operative word in section 55 of the parent act, though, is “may.” Bill 118 would add one more class of regulation, in addition to 50 others already enumerated in the section, which the Lieutenant Governor in Council “may” make. The effective part of the act is entirely permissive. If the permitted regulation is never made, there is no impact on the consolidated revenue fund. On the other hand, if the permitted regulation is made, then the ensuing expenditure will have been approved by the executive council, consistent with standing order 56 and the related general conventions around public financial administration.

I therefore do not concur with the chief government whip that Bill 118 contravenes standing order 56 by imposing a charge on the treasury, and I find Bill 118 to be in order.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Thank you kindly, Speaker, for your consideration of that matter.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CANADA AND ONTARIO FLAG DAYS ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LES JOURS DES DRAPEAUX DU CANADA ET DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Gilchrist moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 98, An Act to proclaim Canada Flag Day and Ontario Flag Day / Projet de loi 98, Loi proclamant le Jour du drapeau du Canada et le Jour du drapeau de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): This bill would seek to recognize something that I suspect should have been recognized back 37 years ago. It came as quite a shock to me to realize that there has never been an official proclamation of the day that either Canada’s flag was adopted, or the Ontario flag. Recognizing the work done by the then Lieutenant Governor, Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable John Keiller MacKay, and by Leslie Frost, the Premier, when the flag debate first started in Ottawa, that we would in Ontario at least maintain the red ensign as a symbol of our history and tradition, I think it’s quite appropriate that May 21, the day in 1965 when the Ontario flag was formally proclaimed, be proclaimed permanently as our flag day and, while we’re on the subject, that February 15 of each year be proclaimed as Canada Flag Day here in Ontario.

1350

ELECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI ÉLECTORALE

Mr Conway moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to amend the Election Act / Projet de loi 100, Loi modifiant la Loi électorale.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): It was several months ago that a constituent of mine named Herman Wellstein, from RR 7 Pembroke, came to my office and asked a very simple question: “Why, in provincial general elections in Ontario, does not the ballot carry clearly the party affiliation of all of the candidates running in that election?” I had no good answer, and my bill today seeks to amend the Ontario Election Act to very simply and conveniently provide that, going forward in Ontario provincial general elections, the provincial ballot will actually not only carry the name of the candidates but their party affiliations as well.

ANIMAL CRUELTY PREVENTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ANIMAUX

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to protect puppies and other animals from cruelty by amending the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act / Projet de loi 105, Loi visant à protéger les chiots et les autres animaux en modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): The purpose of this act is to update and strengthen the 80-year-old provincial law in order to give animal protection agencies the tools they need to do their job of protecting animals from systemic abuse as evidenced by the over 400 puppy mills that operate freely and openly in every community across this province. This act makes it a provincial offence to abuse animals and allows the court to impose lifetime bans on puppy mill operations and others who blatantly and grossly abuse animals. The bill also prohibits persons from training animals to fight other animals and also makes it a provincial offence to obstruct animal protection officers from doing their job. If this bill is passed, it will make a number of amendments to strengthen and update the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

VISITORS

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): On a point of order, with us today in the visitors' gallery we have the principal, staff and students from one of Canada's finest schools, Central Technical School. They're here today supporting the introduction of my bill to protect animals from cruelty, and they've asked me today to give the Premier and his partner, Isabel, T-shirts from the school—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): It's not a point of order. I thought you were going to introduce them.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: On a very serious note, I would seek unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 70, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act with respect to acts of workplace violence.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It has come to my attention that moments ago the Premier of Ontario, just outside this chamber, made a major announcement with respect to the now-cancelled, as I understand it, initial public offering of Ontario Hydro. I would ask you, sir, in your capacity as Speaker to review this announcement given that it was done outside of the chamber, it's a matter of major government policy with no opportunity for either of the opposition parties to properly prepare or respond to it and it does, sir, in our view represent yet another kick at the Legislature and the process that has been established and agreed to by the three parties for major announcements of this nature.

The Speaker: I thank the member. As he knows, the Speaker does not control where statements are made, unfortunately.

Mr Duncan: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The official opposition has been informed that the Premier of Ontario will at least be here to answer questions today. I don't see him in his chair, and question period is supposed to start.

The Speaker: The chief government whip may have some information for us.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): Speaker, the Premier is on his way.

The Speaker: What we could possibly do is maybe stand down the first question.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: If I could be of assistance, standing down the official opposition's first questions may be of assistance, but it will be impossible to stand ours down and achieve any remedial effect.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I move unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 146, An Act to amend the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act and the Solicitors Act.

The Speaker: The member is asking for unanimous consent. I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to seek unanimous consent to move third reading, if I may, of Bill 9, An Act to bring health and safety programs to Ontario students, a very important piece of legislation.

The Speaker: The member has asked for third reading of Bill 9. Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr speaker: I move unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 128, An Act to permit the naming of highway bridges and other structures on the King's Highway in memory of police officers who have died in the line of duty.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): On a point of order, Mr speaker: I move the passing of third reading of Bill 53, An Act requiring the disclosure of payments to former public sector employees arising from the termination of their employment.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think every member of the House will agree with this particular unanimous consent that I'm requesting with respect to Bill 21, and that is to give second reading to Bill 21, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to name Highway 417 the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Highway. I'm asking that, Speaker.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent of the House to pass second and third reading of Bill 52, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act.

The Speaker: The member has asked for unanimous consent. I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr speaker: I move unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 136, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to motorcycle and bicycle helmets.

The Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent. I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr speaker: I move unanimous consent for second and third reading of An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of studded tires.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? There are some noes.

Mr O'Toole: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent of the House to pass Bill 35, An Act proclaiming Irish Heritage Day, in Ontario.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

1400

Mr Colle: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent that would allow for the singing or

playing of our national anthem, O Canada, in this Legislature at least once a week.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? There were some noes.

Mr Bartolucci: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 24, An Act to amend the Municipal Act with respect to adult entertainment parlours.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent that we send an invitation to the Premier of Ontario to attend question period.

The Speaker: That one we're not even going to put forward.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 137, An Act to amend the Private Investigators and Security Guards Act to require a minimum level of training for licensees and to require that uniforms and vehicles of security guards be readily distinguishable from those of the police.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the spirit of co-operation that I see blooming in the House here today, I would seek permission to request second and third reading of the bill I tabled today, An Act to proclaim Canada Flag Day and Ontario Flag Day in Ontario.

The Speaker: The member has asked for unanimous consent. I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 153, An Act to improve safety in highway construction zones by amending various Acts to implement the recommendations from the inquest into the death of Dick Van Rooyen.

The Speaker: He's asked for unanimous consent. I heard some noes.

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent to allow each of the political parties five minutes to comment on the announcement the Premier just made outside the assembly as we have not had an opportunity to comment.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? There were some noes.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Given the events over the last few days, I would like to move second and third readings of Bill 13, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to ensure that the transmission corridors remain provincial assets to be used for public transit, recreational and similar purposes.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO ONE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Let me begin, Premier, by saying how pleased I am that you've come around to my way of thinking with respect to Hydro One.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We'll just wait. Order.

The leader of the official opposition has the first question.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, I think your passing reference to the fact that the IPO is off the table is characteristic of your complete and absolute mismanagement of the Hydro file.

At one time the IPO was on the table; then it was off the table; now it's under the table. There may be some three, four, five or other options out there with respect to the future of Hydro One. At first you had confidence in the board, then you fired the board and now you've hired a brand new board. Apparently we have a chair who is there on an interim basis only. We have a president and CEO whose future hangs in real doubt. Is not the responsible thing to do here, given these circumstances, to withdraw your bill?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): If I'm going to adopt the leader of the official opposition's position on every single issue, that gives me a heck of a lot of latitude on almost anything.

With respect to his specific—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Member for Hamilton East, come to order, please. Premier.

Hon Mr Eves: It seems to be tough to get this matter through to the leader of the official opposition. The reason the bill is in the House is to clarify the ownership rights of the people of Ontario as represented through the province. We've said that from day one.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Eves: Well, I'm sure you didn't, Gerard.

Interjection.

The Speaker: It's too noisy. The Premier has the floor.

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the official opposition would know that the interim board is there until there is an annual meeting held by August 15 of this year. It has never been a secret that it's an interim board, that they're there for that period of time.

The reason we replaced the former board was very simple. We asked the former board to take the appropriate corrective action with respect to certain compensation and severance—

The Speaker: The Premier's time is up. Supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, you're making my case for me. We have an interim board. For all intents and pur-

poses, we may very well have only an interim CEO and president, depending on whether or not they work out her salary package.

We're talking about a multi-billion dollar transaction. We're talking about our one and only electricity highway here in the province of Ontario. As a result of your complete lack of leadership on this file, as a result of your dithering and fiddling, you have introduced uncertainty into the Ontario economy like never before. The Premier may laugh at this, but you have somehow managed, at one and the same time, to alienate both Bay Street and Main Street when it comes to your handling of the hydro file. Until you decide, sir, what kind of leadership you want to bring to Ontario Hydro, is not the responsible thing to do to take your bill off the table?

Hon Mr Eves: Absolutely not. That's not the responsible thing to do.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Why do you still need it?

Hon Mr Eves: Because we are going to bring some private sector discipline to Hydro One, whether it's through a strategic partner, whether it's through an income trust—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Sorry to interrupt the Premier. We'll give him his full minute. We sometimes lose time. You'll get the full minute if we ever get back.

Premier, sorry for the interruption.

Hon Mr Eves: I would say to the leader of the official opposition that we may have the odd detractor on Bay Street but I believe we have none on Main Street as the result of the decision made today.

1410

Mr McGuinty: Premier, I want to remind Ontarians, because you seem reluctant to do so, what it is you are prepared to do with respect to your bill. You're not foreclosing any possibility whatsoever. Your bill will allow you to sell off Hydro One or do whatever the heck else you're planning to do, if at some point in time you in fact make up your mind. That's what your bill allows you to do: absolutely anything and everything with respect to the future of Hydro One.

You want us to pass this over the course of the next two weeks without any determination whatsoever of exactly what you intend to do. Your mismanagement of the Hydro file is going to go down in the annals of history as something that is beyond compare.

You still don't know what to do with Hydro One. At first you had confidence in the board. Then you fired the board, and now we have an interim board. Now you tell us the IPO is off the table—there are three, four or five other options that are floating out there.

Premier, I ask you again: until you make some kind of decision as to what you plan to do with Hydro One, isn't it the responsible thing to take the bill off the table?

Hon Mr Eves: Which day would you like me to take your advice on, December 12, 2001?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Would both members for Windsor come to order, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I almost hate to get back to question period, the comments were so good. Sorry, Premier.

Hon Mr Eves: The Leader of the Opposition asks us to listen to the people of Ontario. We've done exactly that. He stood up at the beginning of his first question and complimented the government on making a decision, and now, two supplementaries later, he doesn't think we've made a decision. I wish he'd get it straight in his own mind before he poses the question.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Education. As you know, Minister, there are 40,000 children in Ontario waiting for special education assessments and placements. I believe we have an obligation to help these kids find success. You have put in place an assessment process that is robbing these kids of the help they need.

I want to quote Michael Moher, director of education at the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board: "Staff has spent thousands of hours doing assessments, writing reports and filling out forms. Paperwork has become a top priority and students are not being serviced in the manner they require. This is what happens when you try to centralize something that shouldn't be centralized."

Minister, my "kids can't wait" plan gets rid of your bureaucratic nightmare and invests the money saved in helping our kids. Will you help special-ed kids by adopting my plan?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Our government has always been extremely committed to ensuring that the needs of students with special needs, particularly the group that I think you're going to be talking about today—high-needs students—are addressed. But I do want to point out the fact that the number you are using, as you well know, is a very unscientific number. I think it's important to recognize that the methodology that was used was certainly not accurate and was based on a very small sample by another group.

I can tell the member opposite that if he takes a look at the history of what's happened in this province over the years, all students have not had equal opportunities to access special education services. What we have put in place is an attempt to ensure there is appropriate programming and resources for all children in this province no matter where they live.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, if you're not happy with the number provided by People for Education, then I ask that you table your number.

I want to tell you about Taylor. He's sitting on your right in the gallery. He's seven years of age, and he's from Ottawa. He's in grade 1. He loves to fish, and he

has one proud big brother. He and his dad have travelled a long way today to ask for your help.

Taylor has a non-verbal learning disorder, and he needs the help of an educational assistant in a small classroom. With that little bit of help, Taylor will do, and in fact has done, very well. But now Taylor is in a regular classroom and has lost his educational assistant. He now gets just four hours a year of extra help. He used to get two hours a day.

Madam Minister, I believe we owe it to Taylor to ensure that he gets absolutely everything he needs to find success in life. His father is telling me that because he's not getting the help he used to get, he's going to have to repeat grade 1 next year. I feel that Taylor and kids like him around the province can't wait. I'm asking you to change the bureaucratic process to help—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up, Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our government has been very committed to special education funding, providing the support for the students. There are many, many children in this province and we have put in place a process whereby we have increased funding since 1998 by 17%. We are presently providing \$1.37 billion. We are requiring that all school boards provide the appropriate services that are needed to the students, and we are right now continuing our efforts to ensure that all children, whether they live in Fort Frances, Ottawa, Leamington or Exeter, Ontario, have the same opportunity.

I can assure you we will continue to do what we have the last five years. We will provide the funding for children in this province, as we have. We've increased it by 17% and we will continue to do so.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, up in the gallery is Hilary Esmonde-White, on behalf of her nine-year-old daughter, Anna. Anna won a three-year battle with cancer, but the chemo she needed to save her life left her brain damaged. She needs one-on-one help in the classroom. She's been told that she has tremendous potential and that she could make it to university if she gets the help she needs. She's not getting it. She's sharing her educational assistant with eight other students and she's been told that she needs one-on-one assistance.

You, Madam Minister, are failing children like Anna right across the province. I've talked about these two kids here today, but People for Education tell me there are close to 40,000 of these children. I think we have a moral responsibility to help these kids get the very best start in life so they can find success. If we can't do that in government, then who's going to do it for them? You've got half a billion dollars for private schools, but you don't have enough money in public education to meet the special education needs of our kids.

I'm asking you, do away with your bureaucratic process and, instead, invest those resources in helping these kids.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I find it a little disappointing how the Leader of the Opposition has attempted to politicize this process. We are all concerned about providing the

appropriate programs and the appropriate level of funding for students in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Sorry to interrupt the minister. Will the minister please take her seat. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: This is the last warning to the member for Hamilton East. We have some visitors in the gallery who would like to hear an answer.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. We have some visitors in the gallery who would like to hear the minister answer.

The Minister of Education.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'd like to quote, because when the previous Minister of Education introduced the changes in special education, this is what Marie Bountrogianni, MPP, Hamilton Mountain, said about the funding formula: "It's the first time that they mandated special services—psychologists, social workers and speech and language pathologists—and I applaud the government for that."

The Liberal candidate in Wentworth-Burlington, Vicky Wilson-Sher, said, "It's good to develop standards that are province-wide...."

I'd just say to the leader opposite that we care about these children; you care about these children; I know the NDP care about these children. We are moving forward. We've increased funding by 17%. We will continue to ensure that all children in this province—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

1420

HYDRO ONE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, you've stated that a privatization of Hydro One is off the table but a partial sale of Hydro One or Hydro One assets is still being considered. Your Minister of Energy constantly tells people that Hydro One assets or part of the company must be sold because there's a financial crisis, the transmission lines are falling down and the money must be found to fix up the transmission lines. But I searched through the whole privatization document, the prospectus, to look for any words that support your Minister of Energy's scare campaign. Nowhere in that prospectus do you find anything that supports his scare campaign. So, Premier, I want to ask you, what's the real reason your government wants to sell off part of Hydro One or some of Hydro One assets?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, we did not say this morning that anything was off the table; we said that we would not part with control of Hydro One. That's exactly what we said. We do believe that we need to bring some private sector discipline to Hydro One. There are many different ways you can do that, but the most conventional way would be to seek out a strategic partner for less than 50%, so the government retains control of the asset,

which I know the leader of the third party advocates. Another way is an income trust scenario. That's another way you could bring in private sector discipline and have people on the board and have partnerships. Another way, of course, is to sell less than 50% of the shares and bring in private sector discipline that way. So there are three conventional ways you could bring private sector discipline to the entity of Hydro One without parting with control on behalf of the people of Ontario, as we have committed to do today.

Mr Hampton: The only private sector discipline we've witnessed at Hydro One was the desire to push the salaries, bonuses and expense accounts up to the private sector level. That is exactly the so-called private sector discipline that the people of Ontario are opposed to.

Your Minister of Energy is out there on a scare campaign telling people that if some of the assets aren't sold off and the revenue used to shore up the transmission lines, they're going to fall down. But when you search the prospectus, nowhere do you find support for that language. So I ask you, are the lawyers and accountants who have put together that prospectus being misleading? Are they saying something untrue, or is your Minister of Energy once again wrong?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, the leader of the third party has been telling us what a great job the board was doing. Now he's concerned that we've removed the former board from their responsibilities. They weren't doing that great a job, in our opinion. They were not responding to the 100% shareholder, the people of the province of Ontario, and they were not protecting the interests of the people of the province of Ontario, which is exactly why they were removed when they didn't respond to what we thought appropriate action should be with respect to the very issues the leader of the third party professes to be concerned about: compensation and severance packages to senior executives at Hydro One.

Mr Hampton: The Premier is trying very hard not to answer the question. The question is about your Minister of Energy's scare campaign, where he goes around Ontario saying, "Well, if we don't sell off some of the assets, the transmission lines are going to fall down. We need to sell off the assets so we get the money to shore up the transmission lines." Yet when you read the prospectus, there is not one ounce of support for that.

Premier, you know, as an investment banker, that putting a misleading or untrue statement in the prospectus is a criminal offence; people can go to jail. So either your Minister of Energy is wrong again, he has mounted another scare campaign, or the people, the lawyers and the accountants, who put together the prospectus have uttered an untrue or false statement and should go to jail. Which is it, Premier?

Hon Mr Eves: Not only with respect to the prospectus, but everybody associated with Hydro One has stated and enunciated on numerous occasions that about \$500 million minimum a year needs to go into capital restructuring of the distribution arm of Hydro One. That has been out there for a long time.

The Minister of Energy is not fear-mongering. He isn't the guy who rented a bus that went around complaining and fear-mongering to seniors and others in Ontario. By now, according to the leader of the third party, the sky is supposed to have fallen in, the ceiling should be down upon us and the lights should be out in perpetuity, but none of those apocalypses has happened as he projected.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Hampton: Premier, yesterday morning the price of electricity shot up to \$700 a megawatt hour, 16 times what it has customarily been in Ontario. I suggest to you that people across this province are concerned when the price of hydro rises 16 times higher in one day.

Again I come back to the question: there is no support for your Minister of Energy's scare campaign. If you read the Hydro One prospectus, about \$500 million was invested in hydro transmission lines last year and \$500 million is committed this year. There's no discussion about needing to sell off Hydro One or any part of Hydro One in order to get that money.

Admit it, Premier: the real reason you want to sell off part of Hydro One, or formerly all of Hydro One, is that you want \$2 million or \$3 million—

Interjection: Billion.

Mr Hampton: —\$2 billion or \$3 billion to put into a pre-election slush fund that you can spread around Ontario. This is going to be a repetition of Highway 407: sell off a valuable asset and use the money to grease the skids for an election. Admit it. That's what it's about.

Hon Mr Eves: Talk about fear-mongering. I think I just heard the leader of the third party say that hydro rates are up 68%. He knows full well that he's fear-mongering again. He's trying to lead the people of Ontario to believe that their electricity bills will be going up 68%, and he knows, at least I hope he knows, that nothing even remotely resembling that, not even 6.8% let alone 68%—perhaps he has the two numbers right; he's just misplaced the decimal point—is going to happen in the future with respect to electricity rates in Ontario.

I know it's an easy political hit and it's easy to get fear-mongering on a spot price for electricity at any particular moment in time, but people in this province don't get electricity bills every second or every minute or every hour or even every day or every week. They get them monthly or they get them quarterly, and over the course of the year, the price of electricity will not go up. He knows that. Why does he continue to fear-monger to the people of Ontario—hopefully, he thinks, for his own political gain?

Mr Hampton: The Premier just sounded like the former chief executive officer of Enron defending huge power increases in California. The question is about the rationale for selling off any part of Hydro One.

The first rationale you gave was about the debt. But we found that on the privatization of the Bruce nuclear plant you actually get less money to apply to the debt. Then it was about private sector discipline. We found out about private sector discipline. It drives the bonuses,

salary and expense account of Eleanor Clitheroe over \$2 million. Most recently it was the scare campaign: you have to sell off part of the company to find the money to maintain the transmission lines. But the prospectus doesn't even mention that; it doesn't even refer to it.

So I'm saying to you, Premier, that the real reason you want to sell off part of Hydro One is that your government wants some money to spread around before the next election, just as you did with Highway 407. Deny it, if it's not true.

Hon Mr Eves: It absolutely is not true. First of all, the leader of the third party must know something I don't know: that there's going to be an election following this. I certainly have no plans to call an election in the near future, and I can assure the member that there will be at least a couple of budgets between now and the next provincial election.

1430

I would also point out to him that he's totally inaccurate with respect to Bruce A, for example. The entity that leased Bruce B is going to spend \$1.1 billion to bring Bruce A back on stream. That never would have been available other than by getting it from taxpayers of Ontario and adding to the \$38-billion debt that's already there to bring that asset up and running. Yesterday, he was in the House quoting some environmental group saying we should do nuclear energy so we can eliminate our coal-powered plants. Today, he's dumping all over nuclear energy. He's all over the map on this issue.

With respect to the 407, every single penny that was raised went to pay down the debt; all \$1.7 billion or \$1.8 billion in profit went to that. It didn't go into any election goodies for any election campaign.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): My question is again for the Minister of Education. Minister, you said in an earlier answer to my leader Dalton McGuinty that you are going to continue what you were doing for the past five years. I'm here to tell you that's not possible. It's not possible to tell the parents who are here today and thousands more around the province that that is going to be your response. What you're doing is, you're taking kids—and I've got pictures of some of them here in front of me—and reducing them to pieces of paper like this. Forty pages—it would take 15 hours of teacher time, hundreds of hours to fill out, thousands of dollars diverted away from these kids.

Minister, I'm going to send you a list of 57 communities in 37 school boards where this problem is documented. It's in every school board.

I want to tell you that here in the gallery is Theresa MacNeil. Her grade 5 daughter, Bernadette, is down to one hour of assistance a day. At one time, she had 100% support in grade 2. Your rules are such that when Bernadette does better because she gets the support she needs, that becomes a case for taking the support away. Will you respond to the plan we have? Will you tell the

families here today, and listening around the province, you won't make them wait—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up. Minister?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I think we need to be clear on one thing. Everyone in this House today is committed to making sure all students in this province who have special needs receive the adequate programming and financial support they need. If the member remembers, it wasn't all that long ago when, depending on where you lived and what board you were with, sometimes you had no access to special-needs funding or services or support or assessments. We are now moving forward. We have the support of the Provincial Auditor. He believes our multi-year plan will promote continuous quality improvement.

I want to remind the member that we have increased special-needs funding by 17% since 1998. We will continue to ensure that we protect the funding for these vulnerable children. We are allocating for them \$1.37 billion—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Supplementary?

Mr Kennedy: This morning, Brenda Omarra was here with her son Sean. Her son is autistic and has fragile X syndrome. He has had one-on-one help for the past five years and this year he's going to be cut back to 5.5-on-one.

Minister, you have to get out of your plush chair in Queen's Park. You need to go and see what's happening out there. You are having paperwork done in place of helping people. In boards across the province, represented by each of these members on your side of the House, no assessments are being done and no help is being given to all kinds of students. I've sent you a list of hundreds of people, with their phone numbers, their schools and their boards, who are willing to talk to you and explain this problem to you.

Today we have with us a number of parents. They can't wait for multi-year plans. They can't have this problem continue. You made this problem with the paperwork. You created this nightmare for them and their families. On behalf of these families but, more importantly, on behalf of the rest of us, it's in all of our interests. They're not here to beg for their kids. They're here because this is in all our interests for you to respond here today—

The Speaker: The member's time is up. Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The process that we have set up we have acknowledged, and we have worked with an ISA working group. It was made up of trustees, supervisory officers, the Ontario Parent Council and others.

I think we've forgotten what the whole process—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): It is inarguable.

The Speaker: I'm sorry to interrupt the Minister of Education.

The member for Windsor West, this is your last warning. You're not going to continue. You're yelling across. I yell "Order," and you keep going. This is your last warning. I will have to ask you to leave if you keep it up. Sorry, Minister of Education.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The entire ISA process was designed to establish each board's share of high-needs students. The process will be complete at the end of this year. It will give us a clear picture of the highest-needs students. It is a comprehensive review to ensure that all children in this province, no matter where they are, receive the support. We've made the eligibility criteria clear. It is up to each board of education to ensure that the appropriate programs are provided.

Mr Kennedy: More rules.

The Speaker: Order. This is the member for Parkdale-High Park's last warning as well.

ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

Mr Al McDonald (Nipissing): My question today is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I'm sure you're well aware an intense storm has hit the Rainy River, Fort Frances and Atikokan areas of northwestern Ontario. Many families in the north have been seriously affected, and it poses great concern.

I am very surprised the leader of the third party is so concerned about Hydro that he's forgotten about the people he represents.

As a northern member of caucus, I am very concerned for these residents. Can you give us an update on this situation?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I'd like to thank my colleague from the north—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Will the member take his seat, please. Everybody calm down. I've never had anything like that. Everybody's just going to calm down. I believe the minister had the floor.

Hon Mr Wilson: I want to thank our colleague from the north for expressing his concerns about, indeed, a serious situation in the northwestern part of the province. I know he understands, being a northerner, that these unfortunate situations do happen all too often in the north. The government is very much aware of the current situation. There's been a large flood up there, for members who don't know. The member is correct in pointing out the areas the flood is affecting most. Atikokan, the town of Rainy River and the townships of Dawson and Lake of the Woods, in fact, have declared emergencies due to severe flooding.

I can assure all members of this Legislature and everyone in the north that representatives of the government continue to be in close contact with local officials in the affected communities. In particular, I want to assure the mayor of Kenora, Dave Canfield, the mayor of Fort Frances, Glenn Witherspoon, and the mayor of Atikokan, Dennis Brown, that the Ontario government will provide

necessary support for the communities affected by the storm. We're here to help them.

In response to the second part, the Minister for Public Safety and Security will specifically outline what the government is doing.

Mr McDonald: I'm glad the Ontario government acted so quickly to help these communities in crisis.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On a point of order, Speaker: The Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Housing might want to inform the House that I raised these issues with them yesterday.

1440

The Speaker: It's not a point of order.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: The leader of the third party did mention to me a riding issue. I never—

The Speaker: Order. It's not a point of privilege.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Nipissing had the floor, I believe.

Mr McDonald: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister. I'm glad the Ontario government acted so quickly to help these communities in crisis.

Minister, can you tell me what the government is doing to help these communities?

Hon Mr Wilson: The Minister of Public Safety will respond.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I thank the member for his concern and for the question.

The Ontario government is very concerned about the residents of these fine communities. I want to assure you that no fatalities or serious injuries have occurred and no formal evacuations have taken place.

Presently, the main concerns are power outages, road washouts, water treatment and sewage plants and supply shortages. Emergency Measures Ontario has dispatched area officers to Kenora, Atikokan and Thunder Bay to provide advice and any required assistance. MNR and EMO are maintaining constant contact with the community leaders. In addition, MNR is currently providing helicopter air support, which allows continued assessment of the situation. Various ministries and the OPP have been called to the provincial operations centre to assist with the province's response. The OPP as well as the various ministries and EMO are working together to provide a more accurate assessment of the impact—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up. New question.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): This question is to the Premier. Your decision to shut down the heart surgery program at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario has sparked an outcry, the likes of which we have never, ever seen in eastern Ontario. In just over two weeks, over 134,000 people signed a peti-

tion calling on you to reverse your decision. You have frightened, angered and brought together families in eastern Ontario like never before. They believe, Premier, as I do and as our doctors do, that your decision to shut down the children's heart surgery program at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario will compromise our children's health care.

My question to you, Premier, on behalf of the 134,000 people who signed this petition is quite simply this: how could you possibly fail to understand how important our heart surgery program was and is to the families of eastern Ontario?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of Health is dealing with this issue. I'm sure he'd be glad to respond.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I want to assure the citizens in and around Ottawa and in eastern Ontario that on this side of the House we're most concerned with making sure that our kids have the very best health care, the very best outcomes so that they live healthy, prosperous and long lives. That's what we on this side of the House believe.

I've tried to depoliticize the issue. I've tried to ensure that we look at the facts, that we look at the best practices, that we learn from the coroner's inquest in Winnipeg, that we learn from the coroner's inquiry in London. I've tried to make this not a political issue but an issue where we can make the best decisions on behalf of the kids in eastern Ontario.

I ask the honourable member opposite to join me and also be a positive influence so we can get the best results for our kids, not only now but in the future.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you will know there was a rally in Ottawa a couple of weeks ago where over 2,000 people came out on a Saturday morning. There was a rally last week in Pembroke where hundreds attended. There are now rallies planned in Cornwall and in Casselman.

We've had family members from Ottawa, Cornwall, Morrisburg, Carleton Place, Smiths Falls, Rockland, Hawkesbury, Pembroke, Arnprior, Renfrew, Barry's Bay, Perth, Merrickville, Kemptville, Winchester, Chesterville, Maxville, Brockville, Gananoque, Kingston, Napanee, Cumberland, Alfred, Embrun, Manotick, Eganville and other places who are outraged that you would make the decision in the first instance to rob us of our children's heart surgery program.

The question I have for you again, on behalf of these 134,000 people, is how could you possibly have made that decision in the first place?

Hon Mr Clement: I know this may come as a surprise to the honourable Leader of the Opposition, but I did so because I thought it was the right thing to do. I thought it would give us better outcomes for our kids.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Last warning for the member from London-Fanshawe. We'll ask you to leave. You're on the list as well, member for London-Fanshawe. Sorry, Minister.

Hon Mr Clement: The reason I came to that conclusion was on the best advice of some of the best pediatric minds, not only in the Dominion of Canada, but throughout the world. So when he asked the question, I hope he wasn't trying to be rhetorical. But that's the answer to the question. Because it's such a serious issue, we decided to review the review through Dr Keon. I have made it clear that if Dr Keon can give me some comfort that there is another way to achieve the best results for our kids in eastern Ontario, I'm willing—believe me, I'm willing—to take that advice.

I'm willing to take that advice. Why won't the honourable member opposite also come clean and say he would be willing to take that advice as well? He hasn't said so. He has kept his options open, which makes it a political issue. I'm trying to depoliticize it. I encourage him to do the right thing: depoliticize the issue and make sure we do the right thing together. Why won't you join with me and do that?

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We have in the gallery today a group from the Castor school of Embrun, who are here to support the position of our leader—

The Speaker: It's not a point of order. I would ask the members not to waste time to do that, particularly when they inject politics into it. On some occasions, as you know, we allow points of order to recognize schools. On some days when we see the children's faces, it's the best thing we do in here. But I'm not going to allow you to do it and then add on something political like that. I would ask all members not do it. It's question period.

WOMEN IN SKILLED TRADES PROGRAM

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The minister recently announced funding for the women in skilled trades program at Conestoga College in Kitchener, and we very much appreciated her visit to our community last week.

We know that economic independence is an important issue for everyone in Ontario. This is both a social and an economic issue. By being able to support themselves and their families, women are not only making a greater contribution to our economic growth, but they also have more choices themselves and are less likely to become trapped in abusive relationships or circumstances.

For everyone's benefit, we need more women qualified and working in the skilled trades in Ontario. Can you inform the House about the women in skilled trades program and the work it is doing to increase the number of women working in non-traditional careers?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): We're very excited about having more women enter apprenticeship training programs, where right now they are significantly underrepresented. They should know that these are great-paying jobs and that we need them.

Just last week I was at Conestoga College—a great success story—with my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services and Mr Wettlaufer. We have more than one letter, but this is basically what one says:

"I have been in the construction electrical trade since 1974. I was a foreman for over 20 years and I am now employed as a project manager. Of the more than a couple of hundred electricians that I have worked with over the years, the number of women I have met could be counted on only both hands. However, they were all good electricians. I can only imagine how hard it was for them to be successful, but believe me, over those years, I've seen a lot more unskilled men."

You should know that even this professional wants more women in the skilled trades.

Mr Arnott: I know we all agree with that answer. We certainly extend our congratulations to the women participating in the women in skilled trades program at colleges and training institutes across Ontario and hope for their continued success.

In addition to the skilled trades, women need greater representation in the information technology industry, a source of much of our province's growth in recent years. The information technology sector offers rewarding and well-paying jobs and is currently experiencing a shortage of qualified workers. Can the minister tell us what the ministry is doing to encourage and prepare more Ontario women for careers in the high-technology sector?

1450

Interjection.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: "Now," says the former mayor of Kingston, who supports women in information technology and has jokes in the House.

We actually have a great pilot program. My colleagues and I across the country, ministers responsible for women's issues, are working together. The government actually invests over \$2 million over three years. It is a beginning, but it is dealing with people who have a very difficult time in technology, giving them every opportunity we can give them.

They are in four sites in Ontario where there are high concentrations of high-tech industry so that they'll have a lot of mentors and opportunities to participate in the workforce. It does target low-income women, because if they get a second chance, a third chance, if we reach out to them, they will be successful.

Of course, my writer says, "I applaud your vision." People don't say that to me very often, so I'm reading it.

In my opinion, there simply will not be enough potential tradesmen to meet tomorrow's demands if only young men are encouraged to apprentice. It is time for an intelligent investment in women's education by all the women in this House, which we support, to begin to fill the void on behalf of young women.

ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I'm

advised in his absence the associate minister will be answering the question.

Yesterday I advised the Minister of Municipal Affairs about the very serious flooding, tornados and electrical storms across northwestern Ontario and that yesterday at this time some 15,000 homes were without electricity. I'm told that today at this time there are still about 8,000 without hydro. All the major highways—Highway 11, Highway 71, Highway 502—have been shut off. There's a "drive at your own risk" advisory on Highway 17.

As you will know, this is the second time in two years that this kind of flooding has happened, so many people and many municipalities have suffered very serious damage.

I want to know, what are you prepared to do to ensure that communities get the help they need now—right now—to have roads restored, hydro restored and other important services restored?

Hon Brian Coburn (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): As we speak, we have representatives there from Emergency Measures Ontario, as my colleagues have pointed out, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Transportation, working with leaders of those communities that are affected to determine steps that should be taken to alleviate the immediate situation.

Last year, the province responded quickly, and we have responded in the same manner this year. We were there with financial assistance. Whatever aid, whatever is needed to alleviate the immediate situation is certainly the direction that is given to our people on the ground in the Rainy River and northern area.

Mr Hampton: Minister, last year communities like Fort Frances, Rainy River and a number of rural communities where there was extensive property damage had to wait for over a year before they received financial assistance from the Ontario disaster relief assistance program. For many people, that's just too long. As well, many municipalities didn't get the money to help them repair their roads, which were completely washed out, until just earlier this spring. This is the second time this has happened now. The washouts are even more severe than before. The property damage is even more severe than before.

Can you assure people that the financial assistance will arrive in a timely way and people will not be forced to wait 12 months, 15 months before they see the money that they need to make these essential repairs and restore the property damage?

Hon Mr Coburn: Certainly representatives of the various ministries on the ground, who had the experience of last year's disaster up there, are working closely with them. I can assure the leader of the third party that we will do everything in our power to alleviate the hardship that the residents are facing up there on a timely basis and provide the financial assistance that's needed to restore the community to its former situation.

At a time like this, when hardship and loss of property affect individuals and raise the anguish among families

and communities, and the financial impact as well, that is something we will address as quickly and in as timely a manner as we possibly can.

MINISTRY SPENDING

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Everyone knows this government's ugly record of scapegoating social assistance recipients. Mike Harris cut off the nutrition allowance to expectant mothers because, he said, it was being spent on beer. John Baird has insinuated that social assistance recipients are drug addicts. Meanwhile, that minister was handing the taxpayers his bar tabs. I hold in my hand a few of the hundreds of receipts that your predecessor, John Baird, got taxpayers to pay. A \$200 tab from the Bier Markt, \$120 from The Keg Mansion, \$180 from Fiddlers Green Pub. Minister, will you join me in condemning this double standard for your ministry?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I refer that question to the Chair of Management Board.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): I'll just refer back to May 28, when the same question was posed to me—different circumstances. "The ministers' handbook provides for reimbursements of expenses for ministers and their staff while on government business, provided the claims are supported by receipts and reasonable for locations where incurred. We provide guidance to ministries in developing their policies. It is the responsibility of each minister to make sure they're followed and are fair and the rules are adhered to." That was my quote from May 28. It stands again today.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Minister, the decay has set in on your side of the House. Ministers say they are entitled to live high on the hog because they work hard. Well, the vast majority of Ontarians work hard, but they don't hand taxpayers the bill for their Danier Leather folders. The Minister of Energy hands taxpayers the bill for his bar tabs, the Minister of Consumer and Business Services hands taxpayers the bill for his fishing licence, and the dining expenses for a month of your predecessor, the Minister of Community and Social Services, were double what a single mom with two children on social assistance live on in a month. What a double standard. Moral decay has set in and the Provincial Auditor needs to be called in to see how deep it goes. Will you ask the Premier to call in the Provincial Auditor to review all ministerial expenses?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Maybe I can get a little more definitive here and put some context to all this. On average, both opposition parties spent more per year on meals and travel when they were in power than our party, and when we adjusted for inflation, the Liberals spent 45% more. The Liberals increased their spending on travelling and meals by nearly \$35 million, and that's

more than 30%. In their first year alone, the Liberals increased their travel and meal expenses by \$14 million. I guess it's, "Do as I say, not as I do," right?

MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I have a question for the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you're aware, the Municipal Act is over 150 years old. Considering that we are in the 21st century, this Municipal Act could not be considered as an effective tool for the issues facing municipalities in today's age. What have you done to ensure that municipalities will have the tools to enable them to ensure vibrant, healthy communities?

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I would like to thank the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale for the question. He is absolutely correct: the old Municipal Act was not effective, and municipalities across the province have been asking for there to be a more modern, streamlined act that could respond to their local needs and environmental and social changes within their communities.

We've responded. We introduced and passed the new Municipal Act last December, which will come into effect January 1, 2003. This new act is the cornerstone of a better, more consultative relationship between the province and the municipalities. Both opposition parties had the opportunity to introduce such an act, but did not. Despite several municipalities' call for a new act, they even voted against it. This government has responded to those requests. Over the last 150 years there have been several amendments to the act that created an extensive act. The new act is more comprehensive. It responds to the local needs with 10 areas of influence, unlike the current one-size-fits-all act.

1500

Mr Gill: I understand, Minister, that the new municipal act gives broader authorities for municipalities. But what is being done to ensure that municipalities are aware of these changes? Is there some sort of training in place for municipalities?

Hon Mrs Molinari: I'm pleased to respond. I know that the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale is also very connected with his municipalities that cover Mississauga and Brampton. I'm pleased to say the report does have education awareness. We are ongoing with the education for all of the municipalities. There is a working group that has been established and is comprised of staff from the ministry and representatives from a number of municipal stakeholder associations. It will develop and implement an education program to help facilitate a smooth transition into the new act.

To date, the working group has met twice: January 10 and February 4. It is in the process of developing a detailed education and training strategy to ensure that municipalities are prepared for January 1, 2003. It is expected that training sessions dealing with specific aspects

of the new act will begin sometime in the spring of this year and will carry on throughout 2004.

We have received very positive feedback from this act from all of the municipalities, from—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I wish I hadn't cut off Ann Mulvale, my mayor, when you said that.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I have a question to the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. During the leadership campaign, you made a statement and I want to quote it: "I'm in favour of a public offering of the shares of Hydro One. We need to come to a conclusion on this. It's important for markets to know and for business to know what the position of the government is."

In the statements made by the Premier today, he is quoted as saying, "The decision on the future structure of Hydro One will be made after several months of public and private consultations and will be revealed before the next election, expected next spring."

This dithering and this vacillating has got to have an impact on what is one of our most competitive advantages, and that is Hydro. Could you tell me what your position is and do you know what the government's position is and what was the advice that you gave to the Premier?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): Science and technology is in the new ministry but energy is not.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I want to just say to this House—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Sorry. Minister of Energy?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm happy to take a question from a member opposite who supports the private school tax credit as fully and completely as I do.

I think since this process has been announced, post-Justice Gans's decision, we've said that we are examining all kinds of options that are brought to our attention. I went through the consultation process and heard many options that were put on the table.

We've examined them and I think we've narrowed the field down to a couple. I don't believe that's dithering at all. I think we're doing the proper thing. We're examining all the options and we'll announce it in due course.

I say to the member opposite, if there's any dithering to be seen here, it's in the position of your leader, December 12 and post-December 12. As I said in this House earlier, the only reason your leader came up with changing his mind is that on December 12 he was thinking too quickly, and it was thinking too quickly that got him into this trouble. He should slow down and think as he normally does, slowly.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): On a point of personal privilege, Mr

Speaker: I want to apologize. The Board of Internal Economy was supposed to meet today, and it's not going to be able to meet because of an attendance issue. We won't be able to consider the request from the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington for more money for her Toronto apartment, because \$16,000 isn't enough. She wants more money.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I would ask all members to cool the temperature in here.

Question period is now over.

PETITIONS

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I have a petition signed by some 54,706 people, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralizing children's heart surgery in Toronto would force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and to ensure that top-quality accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

It is with tremendous support that I submit this petition, and I am pleased to attach my name thereto.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): I'm not very familiar with soccer, but as I understand it, a yellow card is a warning and a red card is, you're out.

I would like you to consider that everyone has a yellow card.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: One more word and I'll not warn you again. I think there is no need for that kind of—I could not hear the leader of the official opposition read his petition, and I don't think that is a position you want to put the Chair of this House in, so I will not have it.

The Chair recognizes the member for Niagara Centre, and if he relinquishes I'll recognize the member for Timmins-James Bay.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have literally hundreds of petitions, probably representing over 1,000 names, from the riding of Timmins-James Bay. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas people with disabilities who rely on the Ontario disability support program payments are facing rising costs, and

"Whereas people unable to work because of serious disabilities have had no increase in support since 1995, and

"Whereas with loss of rent controls their rents have skyrocketed, placing huge financial strains on many ODSP recipients,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to bring fairness to the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, by amending it to provide for regulations requiring annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support programs," just like my good friend Mr Martin is going to propose by way of his private member's bill tomorrow.

I affix my name to that petition.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): "Whereas the citizens of Ontario are alarmed and disappointed with the 'golden parachute' severance packages available to senior executives at Hydro One; and

"Whereas the top five executives at Hydro One are not only making large salaries, but have also been given packages that would provide more than \$12 million if they leave, even of their own accord; and

"Whereas the citizens of Ontario consider this compensation to be clearly excessive;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario instruct the board and senior management of Hydro One to roll back the salaries and severance packages, with the goal of ensuring remuneration is in keeping with expectations of the citizens of Ontario, and

"Further, that the Parliament of Ontario take action to dismiss members of the board and/or senior management if they refuse to reduce the pay and severance packages for Hydro's top executives."

Clearly this is the response of my constituents. I sign and endorse it, and it looks like our Premier signs and endorses this as well.

1510

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I have a petition here that came in to me and my colleague Rick Bartolucci from Sudbury. Thousands of them are coming in. It says here:

"Listen: Our Hearing is Important!

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas new Harris government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas this new Harris government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserviced areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

I am in full support of this and I will affix my signature. Jordon, I will give it to you to give to the desk.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): "Whereas the Ontario disability support program"—more commonly known as the ODSP—"is an important source of income for disabled people who cannot work due to a disability; and

"Whereas there has not been an increase in the amount eligible recipients can receive under the Ontario disability support program since before the current government was first elected to the Legislature; and

"Whereas there have been substantial increases in the cost of housing and other necessary living expenses during the same period of time; and

"Whereas the maximum monthly allowance available for a single disabled person of \$930 is wholly inadequate to meet monthly basic needs";

And whereas Bill 118 has been introduced, the Ontario Disability Support Program Amendment Act (Fairness in Disability Income Support Payments), 2001, to require cost-of-living adjustments to income support payments on October 24, 2001;

And whereas if passed, Bill 118 would ensure that people receiving ODSP will get an annual increase on April 1 to keep pace with the increase in the cost of living;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" as to support Bill 118 through second and third reading.

I assign my signature.

MEDICAL SCHOOL TUITION

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas medical school tuition was deregulated by the Ontario government in 1998; and medical school tuition has and continues to increase in excess of 300% such that at some universities tuition is now \$14,000;

"Whereas the combination of excessive tuition and frozen student allowances have impaired students' accessibility to a medical education;

"Whereas the physicians most likely to practise in a rural area are originally from rural areas themselves; and

"Whereas unaffordable tuition disproportionately excludes medical students from rural communities;

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario government and the universities of Ontario to ensure that medical education be made financially accessible to all qualified students; and

"Be it further resolved that we, the undersigned, request that medical tuition be capped and re-regulated at a level accessible to all Ontarians, and that the Ontario student assistance plan/Canada student loan program be adjusted, in order to ensure that Ontarians from all communities are able to afford a medical school tuition."

This petition is signed by a number of residents from Leamington and Harrow, and I have signed it as well.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): "Whereas the Ontario disability support program is an important source of income for disabled people who cannot work due to a disability; and

"Whereas there has not been an increase to the amount eligible recipients can receive under the Ontario disability support program since before the current government was first elected to the Legislature; and

"Whereas there have been substantial increases in the cost of housing and other necessary living expenses during the same period of time; and

"Whereas the maximum monthly allowance available for a single disabled person at \$930 is wholly inadequate to meet monthly basic needs; and

"Whereas the Honourable Tony Martin"—that's me—"introduced Bill 118, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, to require annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support payments on October 24, 2001, which would have the effect, if passed, of increasing the rates under the Ontario disability support program annually on April 1 to keep pace with increases in the cost of living;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

(1) That it support Bill 118, or similar legislation, through second and third reading; and

(2) That it resolve to increase the allowances payable under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, to reflect the actual costs of living in the province of Ontario."

I assign my signature to this petition.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have received a petition from Mr Peter Kerr of 27 London Green Court in Downsview. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I'd like to read it.

"Leave Our Electrical Resources in Ontario;

"Whereas the provincial Conservative Party of Ontario continues to rob the poor to feed the rich with their agenda of selling off the assets of the people of Ontario; I condemn the provincial Conservative Party of Ontario for planning to sell off our electrical resources that my grandfather, my father and myself have worked so hard over many years to construct and pay for. I feel very sorry for my children.

"As a senior with a dependant, my hydro bill will at least double from last year while my small fixed income will decrease with the cost-of-living increases. My wife and myself will not afford to use our one small window air conditioner this summer thanks to the Conservative Party of Ontario policies of bleeding the poor and needy to line the pockets of the rich of Bay Street. I find the actions of this Conservative Party repugnant as they seem to continuously relish to hammer the needy in Ontario, even thinking themselves to be above our provincial courts."

It's signed by Peter Kerr, it's dated, and I concur with the contents. I will give it to the table.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralizing children's heart surgery in Toronto will force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and ensure that top-quality, accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

It's with great pleasure that I put my signature on this petition.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario will be considering a private member's bill that aims to amend the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases; and

"Whereas optometrists are highly trained and equipped with the knowledge and specialized instrumentation needed to effectively diagnose and treat certain eye problems; and

"Whereas extending the authority to prescribe TPAs to optometrists will help relieve the demands on ophthalmologists and physicians who currently have the exclusive domain for prescribing TPAs to optometry patients; and

"Whereas the bill introduced by New Democrat Peter Kormos (MPP—Niagara Centre) will ensure that patients receive prompt, timely, one-stop care where appropriate;

"Therefore I do support the bill proposing an amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases and I urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage of the bill."

That's signed by hundreds of persons and by me as well.

1520

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition with 378 names from Blue Corners, Alfred and L'Orignal, accompanied by a council motion of the nation municipality.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and to ensure that top-quality, accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

I will gladly add my name to this.

OPPOSITION DAY

LONG-TERM CARE

SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I move that be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario declares unequivocally that the Ernie Eves government should:

Recognize that one of the cornerstones of care of our frail and elderly is the provision of appropriate long-term care;

Recognize that there are over 60,000 Ontarians living in long-term-care facilities, many of whom are frailer and sicker, requiring more care than ever before;

Commit to supplying stable, long-term operational funding indexed to the cost of living that will ensure that the level of nursing and personal care services in Ontario's long-term-care facilities ranks first among similar national and international jurisdictions with similar populations within the next five years

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mr Gerretsen moves opposition day number 4. The Chair recognizes the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr Gerretsen: Speaker, I request unanimous consent to have our leadoff commenced by our health care critic, the member for Windsor West.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? I heard a no. The leadoff will be Mr Gerretsen.

Mr Gerretsen: Thank you very much for the co-operation of the members on all sides on this issue.

Statistics Canada predicts that the number of Canadians aged 65 years and over will double in the next 50 years. As a matter of fact, 20% of our population will be senior citizens by the year 2020, and the fastest-growing age group in Canada is people aged 80 years and over. You and I know that there are over 500 long-term-care facilities in Ontario and that they house approximately 60,000 residents.

Let me give you an example of who the average long-term-care facility resident is likely to be: 70% are over 80 years old; 25% of people who live in our long-term-care facilities are over 90 years old; 95% of them, nearly all of them, require assistance to get dressed and to eat and require some level of observation to reduce the potential of injuries to themselves and others. Most of them, 89% of them, are either incontinent or require some assistance in using the bathroom; 84% of them need assistance just to move about, which is more than six in seven of our residents; 63% have some form of dementia, with 44%

nearly half of them, unable to find their own room within their own home; 56% have circulatory disease; 39% exhibit some degree of aggressive or angry behaviour; and 35% of them have a neurological motor dysfunction.

My main reason for mentioning this is that we have to recognize something that all of us have seen by visiting our various nursing homes, our homes for the aged, and our municipal homes, our charitable homes as well, and that is that the average resident is much older than they were 20 years ago when they first enter the facility, when they're at the facility, and they're much more immobile. As a matter of fact, many years ago, when I first got involved with our municipal home in the Kingston area, the majority of the residents were still able to move about and were in their late 60s when they first entered the home. That has changed dramatically.

I think the other thing that has to be said is that surely we owe it to our senior citizens that they live out their lives with dignity and respect. I guess that's what this motion is about more than anything else. It is to ensure that the people who have given so much of themselves so that we could enjoy the kind of lifestyle that most of us do in the province of Ontario—they are part of the building foundation of this province and of this country. I firmly believe and the members of my caucus firmly believe, and I think most Ontarians firmly believe, that they should be able to live out the remainder of their life with dignity and respect.

Over the years, I've had an opportunity to go into many of the homes. The staff people, by and large, are individuals who are truly hard-working, dedicated and want to do the best they can for the residents. The burden that has fallen on those people in the last few years, primarily because of lack of adequate funding from the province, requiring them to look after more individuals than certainly used to be the case and not giving the individual residents as much attention as they deserve, is part of the problem that exists within our long-term-care facilities today.

In anticipating what the government may very well say about this, I know they will start talking about the 20,000 new beds they're bringing on stream. There's always this notion of confusing the issue, as it were. We're talking here strictly in this resolution about operational funding. We feel that the operational funding that is currently being provided to all of the long-term-care operators, whether they're from charitable homes, municipal homes or in the private sector, simply isn't adequate enough.

The proof that we have for that was the study that was done by PricewaterhouseCoopers. There's nothing new about this study. It's been out for about a year and a half. In that study, they looked at 10 different jurisdictions, both here in North America and in Europe, and looked at the kind of care people needed and the kind of care they were actually getting in the homes. The findings that that particular study came to are not very good as far as Ontario is concerned.

Let me just tell you what this study came up with. They looked at 10 different jurisdictions, as I mentioned

before, in Europe, elsewhere in North America, and they came to the conclusion, this PricewaterhouseCoopers study, that Ontario ranked dead last of the 10 jurisdictions studied in meeting the needs of residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged.

Their findings included such things as, in Ontario long-term-care facilities, the registered nursing care that the average resident receives is about two hours per day, the least among all of the jurisdictions studied. Only two hours per week, or less than two hours per week, of support is received by our residents from the program staff for such things as social work, therapy or activity.

The Ontario long-term residents had the highest proportion of both mental health disturbances and problems, and yet less than 6% of the individuals who needed help received professional intervention. More than two thirds of Ontario's long-term-care residents have restricted range of motion, and yet less than one third of them receive any exercises whatsoever. Furthermore, only 10% of all of Ontario's long-term-care residents with rehabilitation potential actually receive physical therapy.

1530

I think that is a sad comment about the state of affairs of the way we treat our elderly in our long-term-care facilities. When you think that in so many other areas year after year we in Canada and Ontario are ranked by the United Nations as having the highest quality of life, and yet when it comes to issues like this, the way we look after our elderly, we rank dead last, I think it tells an awful lot about our society.

What this motion is intended to do is to rectify that situation. I realize it can't be done overnight. That's why I've set out a goal so that within five years we will rank not among the last but among the best jurisdictions as far as the quality of life we are able to give to our senior residents. That's what this is all about.

The motion is also not condemning the government about its funding policy, because I sincerely hope that all members of the House will embrace this resolution and work in a spirit of working together toward reaching the goal of getting there, as the best possible jurisdiction in which seniors live, within the next five years. That's really what this resolution is about.

I was shocked when I first read this study. I know there will be all sorts of discussions about the new beds that are being created. There's even some controversy now about whether or not we need 20,000 new long-term-care beds. There was a study that just came out over the weekend—at least I became aware of it over the weekend—by Dr Peter Coyte, a health economist in the department of health policy, management and evaluation at the University of Toronto, who believes from the study he's done that we only need about 7,600 to 8,000 new beds.

Be that as it may, I'm not here to discuss that. All I know is that when I talk to various community care access centres or to various long-term-care facilities themselves, I find there are extremely long waiting lists and that people are anxious to get in. Sometimes it takes

two or three years to get into one of these facilities. Rather than getting into an argument about who's right, whether 20,000 new beds is right or it's 7,600 beds, I want to deal with the operational funding situation.

We need operational funding not just for the registered nursing services but also for personal care services. I was surprised, for example, that dental hygiene is not part of the regular routine within a long-term-care facility, and not just hygiene for the residents themselves and the immediate benefits that it will have for them, but I understand there are many other health benefits that may be derived from proper dental hygiene as well.

I also understand, and I've already referred to it earlier, that physiotherapy services are, by and large, not available within many of the long-term-care facilities. There may be many turf disputes between different factions within the health care system. What I'm saying is, let's work together to work out those differences and make the Ontario long-term-care system one of the best in the world so that we can truly say that we are providing for those frail and elderly people who can no longer look after themselves in the best possible way. That's the goal and that's the vision. That's what this resolution speaks to.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I will with pleasure be able to get up to speak shortly for a few minutes on what I think is a really good motion. I want to say to the opposition caucus that our caucus will be supporting this motion. We think it's a step in the right direction.

I want to bring to the debate three examples of where we're hurting in our riding of Timmins-James Bay. I'm sure every member of this assembly can get up and probably give a similar story. Let me give you a couple of examples.

We have currently within our community, as the central placement coordination agency sees it, a surplus of beds. So they say the issue is, when you look at the district overall, we have enough beds to go around and we don't have to worry about adding beds to our system. But it means that many citizens who live in Timmins or in other communities, like Moosonee or Moose Factory or wherever, are having to get placed very far away from home, somewhere within the district, because there are no beds available in their municipalities.

For example, if you're a citizen living in the town of Moosonee, Kashechewan, Fort Albany, Timmins or wherever it might be, it doesn't necessarily mean that because a district has enough beds, we're going to be able to get a bed for you in your home community. Often what it means for people, especially in the remote northern communities, is that the only option is to be given a bed somewhere far away from their community and far removed from their families. I think that's a really bad thing for the health of a person at that point in their life, when they are getting on in age and probably need family around them much more in order to sustain them in their golden years. I look at Moose Factory, Moosonee, Kashechewan, Fort Albany, Ogoki, Attawapiskat and

Peawanuck and there are hardly any long-term-care beds in those communities.

There is a proposal coming together now between the federal and provincial governments to merge and amalgamate the federal hospital in Moose Factory with the provincial hospital in Moosonee. One of the things we could do in all of this, if the province takes over the hospital by way of running it and paying for it, is to use the federal dollars that used to pay for health care and ensure ourselves that there are facilities in each of those communities to provide long-term-care beds to their residents. So if you live in Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Kashechewan or wherever, you don't have to be shipped away to Moose Factory, Timmins, Kirkland Lake or North Bay to get a bed when it comes to providing for your needs in those golden years.

I am calling on the government, through this debate, when we are going through the process of negotiation to create the new provincial hospital on the coast of James Bay, to ensure that we get the federal dollars that the federal government is not going to be paying any more for operating the current federal hospital and that we utilize that money to build, first of all, long-term-care beds, so that we have in effect a hospital in each of those communities, like Fort Albany, Attawapiskat and others, where we're providing not only some chronic care beds but also long-term-care beds to the citizens in those communities. We say to the feds, "All right, we're going to take over the provincial hospital. We're going to pay for the maintenance. We're going to pay for the operation. But, rather than giving us the capital to build a new hospital, you have to provide the capital to help us make sure that within that funding envelope there is enough money to pay for the long-term-care beds for the northern James Bay communities so those residents can receive the same services received in other communities."

Further down the line in the Timmins-James Bay riding is the issue of what happens between Timmins, Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls and Hearst. Those four communities have long-term-care facilities within them. The placement coordination agency takes the view that because there are enough beds within the district—in other words, there may be vacancies in the Hearst unit or there may be vacancies in a Matheson unit—we don't need any more beds within our district. I think that's a little short-sighted, because it means that certain communities like Timmins are hard-pressed to have some of their residents placed in an institution of their choice. Sometimes the only option available to them is to be placed in Iroquois Falls or Kapuskasing, or even North Bay in some cases. I don't think that is a viable option for seniors who need to be around their families.

On behalf of the families and on behalf of those seniors, I call on the government to make sure we have the necessary money to provide an adequate number of beds in communities so that people in their golden years don't have to be shipped far away from their families when those families are so much an integral part of their life.

I also want to make a second plea, on top of the long-term-care beds, and that is about the money that is needed for capital for places like the North Centennial Manor in Kapuskasing and the Foyer des Pionniers dans la communauté de Hearst. First of all for Kapuskasing: this is a facility that has existed for a long time. It was under the old Cochrane District Homes for the Aged board when there was a corporation that ran both the Iroquois Falls and Kapuskasing sites, South Centennial Manor and North Centennial Manor, and at one point Hearst was paying into that as well.

1540

Those things were built a long time ago. They're in need of repairs to bring them up to standards that are more in keeping with today. I'll be meeting very shortly, within the next couple of weeks, with the people at North Centennial Manor to see if there are any capital dollars available for them to be able to reconstruct the facility they have.

I say to the government that you've been really quick in saying, "We're prepared to add all kinds of beds to the system." My criticism of you is that it has all been in the private sector. You've forgotten that the not-for-profit and the municipal homes for the aged are also in need of capital dollars. Rather than taking all your dollars and giving them to your private sector friends to build long-term-care units—you have forgotten that there are not-for-profit and municipal homes for the aged that are very much in need of money. One of those, for example, is the Kapuskasing one.

We're going to meet in the next two or three weeks to discuss in detail how much they need, what needs to be done, how big the building has to be, how many beds and all that. But I want to be able, on behalf of that community and the North Centennial Manor, to meet with the ministry to figure out if there are dollars available in order to go ahead with their capital requests.

Sur la question de Hearst et du Foyer des Pionniers, c'est encore une situation où l'on voit une communauté, qui est dynamique et toujours en train de travailler d'une manière très positive pour la communauté, qui a un très bon projet présentement. Il faut dire que, quand on fait quelque chose à Hearst, toute la communauté s'embarque. Moi, je suis fier de dire que je représente cette communauté dynamique. Dans la situation de Hearst on a l'hôpital Notre-Dame, et le Foyer des Pionniers, qui est l'institution de soins de longue durée, dans la communauté qui ont besoin de faire application pour les capitaux pour être capables de rebâtir leur facilité.

L'hôpital à Hearst et le Foyer des Pionniers, au lieu de faire leur fundraising séparément en faisant la compétition pour les mêmes dollars, ont fait ce qui est responsable et se sont joints sous un seul parapluie pour être capables de faire tout le financement, le prélèvement de fonds, à travers une seule voix pour les deux institutions. L'hôpital Notre-Dame et le Foyer des Pionniers travaillent ensemble pour être capables d'aller chercher de l'argent dans le secteur privé.

J'ai parlé à du monde qui ont été contactés par ce groupe de prélèvement de fonds. Ils me disent qu'ils ont été très bons dans leur devoir parce qu'ils ont cherché beaucoup de dollars où possiblement il n'y avait pas de dollars disponibles. Le comité de prélèvement de fonds a fait un vraiment bon job en allant chercher leur argent pour avoir leur pourcentage, pour faire leur projet.

Sur le bord du Foyer des Pionniers, on commence d'être inquiet avec le gouvernement provincial, qui jusqu'à cette date a promis des engagements pour être capable de financer sa part de la reconstruction du Foyer des Pionniers. Moi, je veux encore amener le point, comme je l'ai fait par le passé, qu'on va continuer avec les réunions plus tard ce printemps en espérant que l'on va être capable de se rencontrer—le monde du Foyer des Pionniers, le ministère et moi-même—pour dire qu'il est important que vous financez non seulement les institutions de soins de longue durée dans le secteur privé, mais que vous ayez l'argent pour payer celles dans le secteur public, telle que le Foyer des Pionniers.

C'est un peu différent pour le Foyer des Pionniers. Il faut être clair que, quand ils avaient été ôtés du vieux système, c'était d'origine ce qu'on appelle une « municipal home for the aged ». Là, ils se trouvent un peu dans le secteur privé en tant que « stand-alone, private corporation ». Même si on a ce statut, le gouvernement jusqu'à date n'a pas alloué d'argent pour la reconstruction de ce centre. Il est important que le gouvernement comprenne qu'il a des responsabilités envers le Foyer des Pionniers et de s'assurer que l'argent soit mis en place pour ce projet.

Le dernier point que je veux faire, parce que je sais que ma collègue, notre critique en matière de santé, aimerait avoir la balance du temps, est sur la question de ce qui arrive avec les soins dans la communauté.

Unfortunately in our community, as across the province of Ontario, we have many seniors and others who are not able to get the level of care they need within their homes from the CCACs. I don't blame the community care access centres. They're not the problem here. They have been trying to do with not a heck of a lot. As a result, our CCAC has had to reduce the hours of service they provide to citizens in our communities. As a result, a lot of those families are feeling quite hard done by.

I'm going to give you one example: Fern Montfort of Iroquois Falls—a long-time resident of that community. I've known him for a long time. Unfortunately, he suffers from Alzheimer's. Up until September, he is getting 160 hours per month of care in his home. His wife, Angie, works at South Centennial Manor, which is the long-term-care institution very near Iroquois Falls. She wants to keep him at home because she knows that once he goes into the manor, his likelihood of surviving longer probably won't be very good. Fern is one of these individuals who needs to be in his comfortable environment called "home," around his family. Every now and then, he recognizes where he is. They've just been advised that they're dropping him from 160 hours a month to 60.

That's devastating to the family. It means to say that Angie has got a decision to make. She either pays 17 bucks an hour to have care come in and provide for her husband, or she's got to quit work or a family member's got to quit work to take care of him, or they have to institutionalize Fern. I want to say on behalf of the Montfort family of Iroquois Falls that those are not acceptable solutions. It may not be my riding any more—I used to represent Iroquois Falls in the former Parliament, but now with amalgamation, it's in the riding of Mr Ramsay—but I raise this issue because I know that family well. They are hard-working people who have paid their taxes all their lives, kept their noses to the grindstone and did what every good citizen should do, and that was contribute to their community, pay their taxes and give back. This is our chance to give back to them.

So on behalf of Fern, Angie and all of the family, I call on this government to make sure that we adequately fund the services in the community care access centres so people like Fern can live with some dignity and don't have to be institutionalized before their time.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I rise today as the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to respond to the opposition day motion regarding long-term care. Our government is committed to providing quality, sustainable long-term-care services in our province. We recognize that as the population of the province ages, there will be increased demands for long-term-care services in Ontario.

Let me say first that I'd like to take this opportunity not only to respond to the member opposite through his opposition day motion, but also to dispel some of the fearmongering that the members opposite have been engaged in regarding long-term care in our province—I might add, at the expense of the facts and at the expense of our government's commitment to long-term care.

I would like to begin with the facts on funding for long-term care in Ontario. First, our financial commitment is very clear. Since the financial year 1995-96, long-term-care facility funding across Ontario has been increased by over \$541.6 million to an unprecedented level of \$1.644 billion, an increase of almost \$550 million in long-term-care funding in the province. As of March 2002, we fund over 60,000 beds in long-term-care facilities in our province in some 521 facilities. Those 521 facilities include some 353 nursing homes, a further 100 municipal homes for the aged, as well as 68 charitable homes for the aged. That makes up the 521 facilities so far in the province of Ontario.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to open up 200 new beds at the Kensington Gardens facility here in downtown Toronto. It is a wonderful facility; it's a charitable home. The event was well-organized and it was well-attended by people within the diverse community served by Kensington Gardens. We also had the pleasure of having the Lieutenant Governor join us for the opening of those 200 beds. I just want to congratulate everyone at

Kensington Gardens for the fabulous facility they've been able to build within their own community and to have all the community support that they do have for that.

We are the government that has not only listened, but we've also responded on the issue of long-term care. We heard people tell us that not one new net long-term-care bed had been built between 1988 and 1998 in our province. That was the time during which both the Liberal and NDP governments were in, during part of that time—not a single bed between 1988 and 1998. The Liberals were in office from 1988 through 1990, and the first part of the 1990s was the NDP. Both of those governments failed to add a single new net long-term-care bed to our system.

1550

After that decade of neglect, we embarked upon an unprecedented—and I say it's unprecedented—\$1.2-billion investment in long-term care that includes the construction of 20,000 new long-term-care beds. That's 20,000 new net beds added to the system. I think the facts speak for themselves and I'm very proud of our government's commitment to building those 20,000 beds. In fact, in the year 2001-02, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care directed more than \$1.66 billion toward long-term care and community services, which includes both community care access centre services and community support services. Nearly \$2 billion of that money went directly to community care access centres.

Starting in 1998-99, we began a six-year, \$55.8-million investment to expand and enhance community services. Those services include such things as in-home nursing, therapy and homemaking, supportive housing, attendant outreach, adult day programs and other community services such as Meals on Wheels and Friendly Visiting. That's where some of that money has gone to.

Since 1994-95, home care funding in this province has actually increased by an unprecedented 70%—a 70% increase in home care funding from 1994-95 to today. We've increased community health spending by over 60% since the NDP was in government and we've increased the community health spending, if you can imagine, by over 400% since the Liberals were the provincial government between 1985 and 1990.

I think it's important that we do look at the Liberal record on health care because again I'll mention that while they were in office there were no new net beds added to the system, but in their 1987 election campaign platform, which was some 15 years ago, they said that they would "increase funding to provide 4,000 new chronic and acute care hospital beds." That's what they said in 1987. The Liberals were in office for three more years, and you know what? Not a single new long-term-care bed was added to the system. In fact, while they were in office the actual number of hospital beds went down in the province. Those are the facts. They can shake their heads across the floor and say, "No, it didn't happen," but the facts speak for themselves. In fact, in the 1990 campaign the Liberals had no plan and no policy for long-term care.

Now, in the 1995 campaign what did the Liberals do? They barely promised to set up a committee to study long-term-care needs. They had no plan; they had no policy. That's the difference between our government and the Liberal Party. We act. We understand there is a need for long-term-care beds. That's why we made that unprecedented commitment of \$1.2 billion to build 20,000 new long-term-care beds in our province.

In Ontario we provide the most generous level of home care services in Canada, and that's at approximately \$128 per capita. The CCACs provide service levels as high as or higher than any other province in Canada. In fact, six of 10 jurisdictions charge co-payments for personal care and homemaking services. I think I only have to cite the example of Newfoundland and Labrador, which charges clients 12% of the overall cost, whereas in Ontario there's no fee charged to those residents needing that care.

But let me assure you, while the members opposite will try to confuse the issue, will try to make political hay out of nothing by preying upon one of the most vulnerable segments of the population, we have moved ahead. We've made some very difficult and very necessary decisions. The members opposite will have you believe that if money grew on trees and it all landed in long-term care, somehow everything would be perfect. I think we know that is not the case and I think we're finding that out right now as Roy Romanow travels across Canada listening to Canadians' views on health care. I believe he knows that's the case and I believe the people of Ontario know that as well.

We have the political will and we have the political courage in this government. That's why we undertook the review of the community care access sector, in particular to ensure that our record funding was leading to a corresponding increase in the quality of patient care.

I know that all members of the Legislature would know that in 1998, we embarked on that very unprecedented and historic \$1.2-billion investment in long-term care that includes the construction of those 20,000 new long-term-care beds. However, I'm sure that not all members of the House are actually aware that we have built more than 5,000 of those beds to date, which I think is a very impressive number. Some 4,698 of these beds are currently in operation today and more than 7,500 beds are currently tendering or are under construction. So we're going to see those beds coming up very shortly to meet the health care needs of the people of Ontario.

As part of this multi-year long-term-care reinvestment plan, we also made a commitment to redevelop up to 1,600 beds in existing long-term-care facilities in the destructural status category. These are facilities and beds that require significant renovation in order to meet legislated structural standards. The time frame for the completion of this process is the year 2006.

I know the members opposite have tried to downplay our commitment to long-term care and long-term-care bed redevelopment. However, I want to clarify it today for those members here in the Legislature and for the

people of Ontario. I want to clarify and make it clear that our commitment is for 20,000 new long-term-care beds and an additional 16,000 redeveloped beds. So it's not 20,000 beds including the 16,000, it's 20,000 new long-term-care beds added to the system, as well as up to 16,000 of the class D beds being redeveloped and being brought on stream for the people of Ontario. I think that's a significant increase in the number of beds—that's 36,000 beds. I want to note for everyone today that more than 1,400 category D beds have been rebuilt and more than 3,480 beds are currently tendering or under construction.

I've also had the good fortune and pleasure to be at several of the groundbreakings and openings for these facilities. One that comes to mind is the Markhaven facility in Markham. I was there earlier this spring. One of my first events as Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care was to go to that facility for the groundbreaking, to see all the community support that was there and to see this facility come through and develop those beds. That's a very significant contribution in the riding of Markham.

A process was also undertaken to identify 1,700 interim long-term-care beds as a short-term solution to placement problems involving patients awaiting transfer to a permanent long-term-care facility from an acute care facility. I'm proud to stand in my place today as the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and to say that the 1,700-bed target has been met. I will also be unabashed in my boasting and say that in the very near future, approximately 6,000 of the 20,000 new long-term-care beds will have been built.

The Ernie Eves government is committed to providing quality, accessible health services to all Ontarians. That commitment includes every resident of the province who receives either care at home or care at a long-term-care facility.

Community care access centres offer a simplified point of access for Ontario's long-term-care system. CCACs arrange for visiting health and personal support services in people's homes and they authorize services for special-needs children in schools. In addition, they manage admissions to long-term-care facilities. As well, CCACs provide information referrals to the public about community agencies and services that are available in various parts of the province.

I think it's clear that we have made a significant financial commitment in this area of health care and we continue to work with community care access centres across the province to respond to the needs of the local residents they serve within the framework of their operating budgets. I say this because this government takes its responsibility to community care access centre partners, and accountability to Ontarians, very seriously.

Accountability means setting expectations which we can all measure, to ensure that our health care system continues to be effective, efficient and, most importantly, responsive to the health care needs of the people of Ontario.

1600

To support community care access centres in their key role in the community, we needed to strengthen their role through a series of reform strategies. We undertook a review of the community care access centre sector to ensure that our record funding was indeed leading to a corresponding increase in the quality of patient care.

Our government is committed to a strong community care system and to ensuring that the right people are able to access the right level of care at the right time; I think that is very key. In fact, on May 1, 2002, a new placement regulation for long-term-care facilities came into effect. This revised placement coordination process will reduce admission delays, ensure that we have a more accurate waiting list of those wanting to get into a long-term-care facility in our province, and will mean that all bed vacancies in these facilities will indeed be filled more quickly by persons who have the greatest need for placement in a long-term-care facility.

With respect to this regulation, we worked with our partners in the long-term-care and community-care sectors to bring in this new regulation that is going to shorten the waiting list for long-term-care facilities and speed up the application process.

I think it's important for all of us to understand that these changes are very much consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions. For example, if we look at Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia, patients are requested to choose three facilities. What we've done in Ontario is find out what's happening in other provinces from coast to coast. I think our regulation reflects that and will indeed reduce the waiting list and ensure that those individuals who need to get into a long-term-care facility are able to do so on a more timely basis.

These changes we've brought forward are an important part of our government's broader strategy to put in place a quality health system that addresses the changing needs of the people of Ontario, and it's very important that we do that.

But you don't have to take my word to see that these changes are benefiting patients and residents of long-term-care facilities. Talk to our stakeholders, people like Karen Sullivan, the executive director of the Ontario Long Term Care Association. Here's what she had to say about the new placement regulation that came into effect in our province on May 1 this year: "We are encouraged with this government's approach to the future direction of CCACs, particularly the efforts to address issues affecting placement in long-term-care facilities." That's what Karen Sullivan, the executive director of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, had to say about this new placement regulation.

During the course of the last few weeks, there has been a whirlwind of fear-mongering and, I might add, information that has been less than accurate coming from the members opposite. Recently in the media and through various reports, I've read allegations about actions we have taken that quite simply are false, and I'd like to defuse a few of those myths right now.

I'd like to begin with the allegation that we have somehow eliminated a requirement to provide a minimum of 2.25 hours of care per resident per day in long-term-care facilities. The fact is that each resident is assessed according to his or her needs.

The second allegation is that our government eliminated a requirement for long-term-care facilities to submit staffing schedules annually to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. In reality, long-term-care facilities must produce staffing schedules to a ministry compliance adviser upon request.

Another allegation that came forward was that we've eliminated the requirement to return 50% of the surcharges for preferred accommodations to the ministry. This money has been made available to long-term-care facility operators so that they can indeed reinvest it in the operation of their facilities.

Last, we allegedly eliminated the requirement to reserve the majority of long-term-care beds as ward accommodation; I read about this in the paper about two weeks ago. In fact, this regulation was changed by the NDP in 1994. The regulation applies to all long-term-care facilities in our province and requires that all long-term-care facilities must offer at least 40% of their beds as basic accommodation. That means not semi-private, not private but basic accommodation. At least 40% of those beds must be offered at the basic accommodation level.

We agreed with them, and that's why nothing changed. That regulation was changed in 1994, and nothing has changed on that today, but somehow members of the opposition stand up and say we changed a regulation in 1994. We were not the government at that time.

I know the member for Windsor West will appreciate my desire to clarify again for her some of the facts about compliance in long-term-care facilities, in particular with respect to bathing. Let me quote from a statement signed by the member for Windsor West on May 21, 2002. She alleged that, "Many of our seniors in long-term-care facilities are getting maybe one bath every 10 days." The member for Windsor West has yet to bring to my attention any instances of non-compliance. I've now waited for over three weeks, and I will continue to wait patiently.

Despite her abysmal record on the facts—I think we've seen that in her attack on the people of Peterborough and the hospital in Peterborough, accusing them of not being able to provide services on a timely basis. Some of those services are not even provided at the hospital in Peterborough, but somehow there's a giant waiting list. Facts simply don't enter the picture. This is fear-mongering at its best. I think it's a gold-medal performance in fear-mongering on the part of the member for Windsor West.

This government is committed to providing sustainable, long-term-care services in our province, services that are of a high quality for the people of Ontario. Our primary concern is for the residents, and we take con-

cerns expressed about compliance very seriously. That's why I have repeatedly said that if you know of any instances of non-compliance, I would encourage you to bring those complaints forward for investigation. Otherwise, it is simply unsubstantiated rhetoric and fear-mongering.

I want to stress for all members of the House that if you have a concern about compliance with our legislation or regulations pertaining to a long-term-care facility, you can take one of the following three steps: you can lodge a complaint with the facility administration, you can lodge a complaint with the local community care access centre or you can lodge a complaint with the appropriate Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care regional office. I might add that formal complaints will be followed up by one of the 42 compliance advisers at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

This government takes compliance in long-term-care facilities very seriously. That's why we are the only government in over a decade in Ontario to actually shut down a long-term-care facility.

According to the Provincial Auditor's report in 1990, the Liberal government took no action related to compliance. I was quite shocked when I saw that at first; in fact very disappointed. In 1989 an entire year went by and nothing happened. They did not inspect any of the long-term-care facilities in this province, and I think that's absolutely shameful. To put it into some sort of context, compared to the Bill Davis government's record there was actually a 100% decline in compliance-related activities.

Through the long-term-care compliance management program, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will continue to ensure that the highest possible standards in quality of care are provided to residents of long-term-care facilities in Ontario. Indeed, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is continuing to conduct annual reviews of long-term-care facilities. I think it's very important that we realize that is happening. In fact, there is an ongoing professional development and training strategy that has been developed by the ministry's compliance advisers involved in the inspection of long-term-care facilities. This strategy, for all members to understand, focuses on best care practices, on competencies, on multidisciplinary team approaches and on consistency in interpretation and application of long-term-care facility standards, regulations and legislation. That is very important.

I want to conclude my remarks by stating again that this government is committed to providing quality, sustainable long-term-care services in Ontario, and we recognize that as the population ages there will be increased demands for long-term-care services in our province. That is why, as Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, I will not be supporting today's opposition day motion. That is also why the Ernie Eves government remains committed to creating a strong community care system and to ensuring the right people are able to access the right level of service at the right time.

1610

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I made notes today to speak to my colleague's resolution. I made them out of an awareness, I believe, of what's happening in long-term-care facilities and I made them out of concern with what's happening, both to residents and to staff in long-term-care facilities across this province.

After listening to the associate minister, I'm so enraged I don't know where to begin. I had truly hoped the resolution that has been presented by my colleague, the member for Kingston and the Islands, would force—I'd like to say "encourage" but I think the word is "force"—the government to at least begin to address the reality of what is happening in long-term-care facilities, nursing homes and homes for the aged, right across the province of Ontario, but clearly that's not going to happen.

Every time we have asked in this Legislature about long-term-care facilities, we have gotten one response from the minister, and that's about 20,000 beds that are supposedly going to be delivered, about the dollars that are going into 20,000 new beds. We could debate all day about whether those are old beds, new beds or replacement beds—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan has the floor; only she and no one else. Everybody else who talks is out of order. I don't want to have it.

Mrs McLeod: As I say, we could debate all day about whether these are new beds or old beds; whether they're up and running or not up and running; whether they're needed or not needed. That's not about this resolution. This resolution is about the fact that there are people in those beds. I'm not sure the associate minister once, in his entire response to this resolution, talked about people. He mentioned "patient" once as some kind of anonymous statistic, a placement problem which they believe somehow has been solved with a new placement coordination system.

The residents of long-term-care facilities are not "patients." They are people who are residents. They don't just occupy a bed. God forbid that's all we do with our long-term-care facilities: put people in there to put them in a bed. Most of these people, if not all of these people, spend the rest of their lives in this long-term-care facility. Surely to goodness they have a right to a decent level of care. Beyond that, surely they have a right to an environment that allows them some quality of life.

The minister talked about increased funding. We're not talking about beds; we're talking about global increases in funding. If we were in estimates I'd ask him how much of that funding is for beds, for capital, for structure, for debt, and how much of it is actually to improve the quality of life and the care for people who are going to be in those new facilities or in the old facilities.

He talked about home care funding. This is about long-term care. We've got a lot of debates on home care.

We've got a lot of concerns about home care. We could go on all day about the rationing in home care, and the fact that any increase in funding for home care is dealing with population growth at the same time as the services are being rationed and reduced more and more. That's not today's debate. Today's debate is what we are doing to—I wish I could say "for"—the people who are residents in our long-term-care facilities.

The associate minister suggested this is all about opposition fearmongering. He quoted on placement co-ordination services, "how we've managed to solve the placement problem of these patients." He quoted Karen Sullivan. Let me quote Karen Sullivan, the executive director of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, who says, and this is just one small part of her quote: "Despite the hard evidence in the government's hands, funding is not keeping pace with the growing care need and the gap is widening." There are people who are resident in these homes and the government is not providing the resources to meet their care needs, let alone concern themselves with quality of life.

The petition campaign that has brought 50,000 signatures of concerned individuals to this government wasn't started by the opposition. That's not opposition fearmongering; that's the Ontario Long Term Care Association, the people who provide the care, so desperate to get the government's attention to what's going on that they started a petition campaign.

Opposition fearmongering. The two opposition parties a year ago did indeed have a tour across the province to talk about long-term care. We had families come to our forums angry as well as concerned not just about the care but about the safety of their loved ones who are in nursing homes and homes for the aged. And it wasn't just family members who came, it was staff. In Thunder Bay there was a staff member who listened to the concerns of the families of the residents, who listened all evening long and finally she got up to speak and she was in tears. She said, "I hear you. I know what you're saying. I can't do anything about it. Do you know the kind of pressures that I'm working under?" She was in tears. She's not the only one I've met with and spoken with who is doing her best to try to provide the care that's needed. They know that they not only can't meet the level of care, the standard of care they want to provide, but they are fearful for the very safety of the people they care for and indeed for themselves.

Let's recognize who the residents of these long-term-care facilities are. These are the people who can no longer be supported through home care. These are the people whose care needs are so great that they need to be out of their homes and in a residential facility. The average age of those individuals is now 86 years. These people are a vulnerable population. We have long waiting lists to get a long-term-care bed in the province of Ontario. When you've got long waiting lists, your care needs have to be pretty critical before you're actually going to get admitted.

Six out of 10 of the residents, with the average age of 86, have a dementia. That proportion of people with

dementia in our nursing homes has increased exponentially as this province has shut down psychogeriatric beds and chronic care beds and said to long-term-care facilities, "Thou shalt take these people but we're not going to give you any additional dollars to meet the needs of people who need constant care." Well, they're not getting constant care.

You've heard the statistics already today. It's a statistic: four minutes a day to get up and washed and dressed and down to the dining room. You can't do it. You can't do it with an average individual of average age, let alone an 86-year-old with advanced Alzheimer's. Ten minutes a day to help with eating. Mr Speaker, have you been in a nursing home and seen how many of those residents are able to feed themselves? Do you know what happens when they only get 10 minutes of help a day? Do you know what happens to their nutrition? Do you know what happens to their health? Fifteen minutes a day for programs. That means in the course of a day, at best, each individual is going to be helped to walk down the corridor and back to their room, or maybe to the sitting room to watch TV. Is this ideal? Would anybody who works with these people say this is ideal, this is the care they want to provide? Absolutely not.

It is the desperation of the people who know what's happening that led them to start a petition campaign. They don't want the world to be talking about the fact that this is the level of care that's going on. They don't want that to be the level of care. But if they don't get more support, they're losing the battle to make our nursing homes anything other than warehousing of our seniors.

I have just 30 seconds left. I just want to tell you, if I sound a little passionate today, it's because I'd like to tell the story of my mother, who did spend the last three months of her life in a home for the aged. My mother was one of the lucky people, I guess, because by the pure luck of the draw, when she had to be placed in a nursing home, the home that came up that had the first bed available was a municipal home for the aged. The reason I say that was the luck of the draw is because in my municipality they still do a 20% top-up. In the home that my mother was placed in, that 20% meant that the home had been able to have an occupational therapist for its Alzheimer's unit.

My mother had advanced Alzheimer's. She was alone because she could not recognize anybody she knew. She was fearful and anxious. She hadn't slipped into sort of a gentle, peaceful forgetfulness that we'd like to think Alzheimer's patients experience. But in that nursing home, in that home for the aged, that occupational therapist was able to find a place where my mother was, and she had her baking bread and she had her nursing the other patients, because my mother when she was a young girl always wanted to be a nurse, and that's where my mother was. And for three months, my mother had a quality of life that she hadn't had for the previous two years.

I'm sorry to my whip that I've taken a minute. I conclude my remarks by saying that that is now considered

an extra, an impossibility, because we're not even meeting basic care needs.

I conclude with my plea for somebody over there to hear: basic care needs, yes, but please let's go beyond and provide some quality of life for this most vulnerable, most needful and most deserving population.

1620

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): It's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate today. As was indicated by my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, New Democrats will be supporting the resolution. I will be the one remaining speaker to the resolution.

I was astonished, frankly, to hear the Associate Minister of Health portray this resolution as fearmongering on the part of opposition members, because the fact of the matter is, the concerns that are being raised are the very concerns that have been articulated in the many postcards that are coming in to all members of this Legislature in a campaign that is now underway to get the government to understand that the basic health care needs of residents in long-term-care facilities are not being met. The cards are coming in from family members, from residents themselves and from staff. So it is ridiculous for the Associate Minister of Health to try and portray either that campaign or the resolution that has come forward today in response as somehow fearmongering from opposition members. Those concerns coming to us from constituents in our ridings—and I know they're coming to Conservative members too—are coming from the very people who are, unfortunately, experiencing that lack of care or from their family members who are very concerned about that lack of care in this province's long-term-care facilities.

I also think, because the minister quoted I believe it was the executive director of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, it is worth pointing out that that association is behind this campaign, is supportive of it and is promoting it. So the very association that he has tried to reference as somehow being supportive of what this government is doing on long-term care is the very association that is behind this current campaign to increase operational funding for long-term-care facilities. I think people who are watching this debate out there need to know that very basic fact.

The cards that we are receiving really do demonstrate that there are pitiful levels of care being administered to residents in Ontario's long-term-care facilities, and the resolution speaks to the need for this government to do something about that.

I want to go back to how we got to the position that we are now in, where there is now a provincial lobby underway by the Ontario Long Term Care Association, which is a friend of this government, if you take a look at some of the players like Extendicare and others and their campaign contributions. But they are clearly on the side of trying to convince the government that something needs to be done. We got here, to this day, because this government, since it has been elected, has made a number of changes to regulation which regrettably have

resulted in a loss of care for residents in long-term-care facilities. Let me outline a few of them for you today.

It was this Conservative government, in 1997, which did away with the minimum standard of care in long-term-care facilities, which was 2.25 hours per resident per day in our facilities. You see, that was put into legislation. That minimum care requirement was part of Bill 101, which was brought forward by our government when we brought nursing homes, charitable homes for the aged under one act so that we could have set standards for residents regardless of the placements that they were in. So it was a requirement under Bill 101 that residents receive 2.25 hours of hands-on nursing care per day. This government did away with that requirement. There are no minimum standards with respect to the hours of care per day that have to be provided to residents in long-term-care facilities. This government did away with that standard.

This government also eliminated the requirement—again, this requirement was put in place by our government in 1993—that nursing homes had to submit staffing schedules annually to the Minister of Health as part and parcel of their annual service agreement with the Ministry of Health. I heard the associate minister say today that that will still be supplied upon request to a compliance officer. That's a far different situation from being a requirement submitted annually to the Ministry of Health as part and parcel of an annual service agreement. You have to hope a compliance officer is actually on site at a long-term-care facility, hopefully doing an inspection, and hopefully that will be provided. Under our government, that was given to the Ministry of Health. It was available to the public, to residents, to family members who were concerned. It was part and parcel of the agreement for delivery of care between that facility and the ministry. Saying that somehow the requirement is being met because if a compliance officer goes into a long-term-care facility and asks for that staffing schedule, it will be provided, is just an excuse for what has become an inability of both residents and families to clearly know there are staff who should be available to deal with the care of their loved ones.

Fourth, I mentioned compliance officers because the other thing that happened under this government was a dramatic drop in the level of reviews of facilities that took place between 1996 and 1999. Under the long-term-care facility manual, comprehensive reviews of facilities must be carried out at least once a year. Those inspection reports are to be posted in very easily accessible locations in long-term-care facilities and they are also to be available to the public on request. As a result of Ms Lankin's investigation of this matter because of something that happened to her mom in a long-term-care facility, we New Democrats discovered in the year 2000 that the Ministry of Health had not been undertaking these comprehensive reviews of facilities at least once a year. In fact, between 1996 and 1999, there was a 40% drop in the number of comprehensive reviews that were being undertaken by Ministry of Health staff. When we

dug deeper and got more information through freedom of information, we discovered that many of those facilities hadn't seen a compliance officer for an inspection review through that whole three-year period. That's why I point out it's rather strange that the associate minister will say, "No problem. Facilities still have to submit staffing schedules. They submit that to a compliance officer on request." Well, through most of that three-year period, there weren't inspections going on in most of those facilities.

I don't know what the numbers are now. Certainly, in response to what was a very public outcry as a result of the questions raised in this Legislature by Ms Lankin, I know that the then Minister of Health, Mrs Witmer, tried to get some people on the job to get those inspections done. I suspect it's again probably time we did an FOI request, just to find out what it's been like after that hue and cry and that very public scrutiny of what was not going on with respect to inspections and what was supposed to be going on. Clearly, I think it had an impact on patients and patient care when there was no one from the ministry in the facility for two and three years at a time to observe what was happening and to see if operators were in fact in compliance.

1630

Fourth, it is true that under Minister Wilson there was an allocation of funds to long-term-care facilities. The problem with that allocation was that no strings were attached to that funding. We had quite a dilemma at the local level—meaning my community—when that funding was announced by Minister Wilson, because the union, CUPE, to their credit, went to the long-term-care facility operator, asked for the increase he was supposed to get and asked how it was supposed to be spent. They did this because the minister in this place and outside of this place had said very clearly that that additional money was going into direct patient care, to hire more nurses, to hire more psychologists etc. CUPE, at the local level, discovered that the facility operator was going to spend the bulk of the money on increased WCB premiums and increased payments for disability benefits because there were so many people out on short-term disability. In fact, at the end of the day there were very few new positions created to provide direct hands-on care to people in that facility in Sudbury. I suspect that happened right across Ontario. While it is true that funding was allocated, because there were no strings attached, there was no guarantee whatsoever and no provision for that money to go directly into hands-on nursing care.

While we support what comes before us today from the Liberal Party, I also want to make it very clear on behalf of the New Democratic Party that when the government—and I say "when" because I say they must—increases operational funding to the long-term-care sector, it absolutely must have strings attached. Any increased funding absolutely has to go into increased hands-on patient care in the form of increased staffing. Any facility that's not prepared to do that, or doesn't, shouldn't be entitled to get that increased funding. That is

the only way we are going to guarantee that we increase care provided to residents who need it.

This government made another change in November 2000. The government let long-term-care facility operators keep 100% of the surcharges paid by residents for preferred accommodation. That resulted in their receiving about \$8 a day for a semi-private room and \$18 a day for a private room. Historically under previous governments, that surcharge was split: 50% returned to the government and 50% went to the long-term-care operator. As a direct result of that change in November 2000, a windfall of about \$47 million was experienced by this sector, because they were now going to keep 100% of that money.

The problem was that there were absolutely no strings attached to the government's change either, and so for-profit operators saw a direct bottom-line benefit. In fact, just after the change was made Extendicare reported to its shareholders that it would have a \$2-million increase in its profit that year, directly as a result of that government change.

It didn't have an impact in the same way on the not-for-profit sector, because they're not reporting to shareholders, they're not making a profit. That 100% surcharge that came to the not-for-profit long-term-care facility operators went back into patient care, but nothing of the sort occurred in the private sector, because there was no condition placed by the government for the for-profit operators to do so.

There you see a direct change in government policy that could have benefited residents and their care if the government had said that 100% of the surcharges going back to the long-term-care operators in the for-profit sector had to go into patient care. Because the government didn't do that, that money went to their bottom line. The very clear example of that was the one I related to you from Extendicare.

There are other changes that were made, but let me deal with those because I think the result of those changes—no minimum standard of care, no need to submit a staffing schedule, no need to ensure that the surcharge from preferred accommodation went back into hands-on care, a real lack of inspections occurring through the period of at least 1996-99—is very clear in a study that the government itself funded. That was the PricewaterhouseCoopers study that was referenced previously that was released publicly in January 2000. I said earlier that this was paid for by the Conservative government. It was commissioned by OANHSS and the Ontario Long Term Care Association, released in January 2000. I think it's worth reviewing some of the details.

The purpose of it was, first, to evaluate the acuity of residents; second, to review the provision of services in facilities; and, third, to compare the acuity and services received in Ontario long-term-care facilities to those of Ontario complex continuing care settings, as well as long-term-care facilities in other provinces, the United States and Europe. Some of the results are very profound and speak to the reason why the resolution is before us today and the reason why there is a lobby going on in this

province today to increase funding to long-term-care facilities.

The study clearly showed that Ontarians who live in long-term-care facilities exhibited among the highest levels of Alzheimer's, dementia and depression across all of the jurisdictions that were included. The jurisdictions included were Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, South Dakota, Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands. Despite Ontarians in these facilities being among the oldest and having the highest levels of dementia and Alzheimer's, they also received the lowest levels of service when it came to nursing, rehabilitation and therapy.

It's worth looking at those conclusions in a bit more detail. More than half of the residents in Ontario long-term-care facilities have a diagnosis of dementia and/or Alzheimer's and a substantial number have a diagnosis of serious physical impairments such as arthritis, stroke and diabetes. Here is part of the conclusion: Ontario long-term-care residents clearly receive fewer nursing, therapy and rehabilitation services compared to everywhere else. In fact, Ontario long-term care has the lowest level of nursing care, at only 2.04 hours per resident per day, as well as the lowest level of rehabilitation services of all jurisdictions surveyed. Only 10% of residents who have the potential for rehabilitation actually receive it. And, despite the fact that 61% of the residents in Ontario long-term-care facilities present with behavioural issues—the highest of all the populations surveyed—they receive among the lowest levels of therapy: only slightly more than 10 minutes per person per day.

I think those results are quite profound. I think they clearly show that there has been a huge problem as a result of many of the changes this government made with respect to minimum standards of care. I think it should have been a call to action on the part of the government to respond, since they paid for the study.

What did the government do as a result of the release of this study in January 2001 by PricewaterhouseCoopers? The government hasn't done anything in response to the very serious issues that were raised in this document—serious issues about Ontario residents in long-term-care facilities having the lowest level of nursing care, the lowest level of rehabilitation care and the lowest level of care for people who present with behavioural problems.

The government of the day has not introduced minimum standards of care in long-term-care facilities since they did away with that in 1997. The government of the day has made no requirement for long-term-care facilities to actually have to submit a staffing schedule annually as part and parcel of their commitment to running that operation. The government of the day has done nothing with respect to itself increasing funding that goes to long-term-care facilities, even with conditions, to ensure that some of these horrendous statistics could be addressed. In fact, the government has done nothing, and on the home care side has frozen the amount of money flowing to home care in the last two years, which is

pushing even more people who could remain in their own homes into these long-term-care facilities where it has clearly been demonstrated and documented that the level of care they receive is not adequate. In fact, it is completely inadequate.

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The government's lack of action in dealing with the PricewaterhouseCoopers study clearly demonstrates its lack of commitment to seniors. But more insidious, the government's decision to essentially freeze home care in the last two years and force more people into those facilities, knowing full well how horrendous the conditions are, really clearly demonstrates neglect on the part of this government when it comes to dealing with basic—basic—health needs of Ontarians who live in this province's long-term-care facilities.

I listened to the government's response. I listened very carefully to the associate minister, who spent the majority of his time talking about the construction of new long-term-care beds, which is a capital cost and not an operating cost. I do want to deal with that, because what I didn't hear from him was any discussion whatsoever about a study that has just been released from the University of Toronto which clearly shows that this government grossly overestimated the need for long-term-care beds in the province, at the expense of money for home care. The finding of the researchers—there was some mention of it in media reports over the weekend—was that this government actually has a need by 2003 for about 7,600 beds, substantially lower than the 20,000 beds the province has approved.

The principal researcher, who is Dr Peter Coyte, a health economist in the department of health policy management and evaluation, said the following: "The government has expanded long-term-care bed capacity in a direction for which there isn't a significant underlying demand. Consequently, the government could have spent its money more prudently by allocating monies to in-home service provision for the elderly or even to other areas of health care."

What was interesting was that on Saturday there was a Ministry of Health spokesperson, John Letherby, who defended the government's position by saying that it was still the ministry's belief that they did need 20,000 beds and that that was based on 1991 census data and that the ministry was sticking to it. I suppose the ministry is doing that because the government's own Health Services Restructuring Commission, appointed by this government, all of the members, reported in March 2000 that the province would need 20,000 beds by 2003. So I assume that's why the government is sticking by this, because it was its own commission that reported on this in the year 2000.

But as a result of what we saw over the weekend, we talked to Dr Peter Coyte today. He said that their work was based on the most recent population data, 1996 to be exact, and that he feels very confident that he and the other researchers involved reached the proper conclusions. They feel very confident about the population

data and numbers they used, and they feel very confident that the government has grossly, grossly overestimated the number of long-term-care beds.

What was interesting, though, is that he also told us that the Ontario Long Term Care Association had told them, as researchers, that they had also proposed a much lower number of new beds to the government too. So the 20,000 new beds are not even supported by the Ontario Long Term Care Association. This is what Dr Peter Coyte related to us today.

Why do I raise this issue? For a couple of reasons, because it does have an impact on residents in long-term-care facilities. Let me go at it this way. I think Dr Coyte is absolutely correct, that the government has grossly overestimated the number they need, that the newspaper articles over the weekend were correct when they said the government has been aware of this and is worried about it, and that in response the government is now doing what it needs to do and what it wants to do to try to fill those 20,000 beds.

One of the things the government is doing, of course, is freezing the funding for home care, which the government is now into for its second year. Last year, the Minister of Health announced that the level of funding for home care would be based on the previous year and that would be it. For many associations, for many CCACs—including my own—that represented a cut in the budget because they had had a deficit at the end of the fiscal year that was funded. But the government wasn't setting its budget amount at that level, that is, the level with the deficit included. It was only basing its allocation on what had been originally told to the CCACs would be their full in-year funding. So for many CCACs, we are now into the second year of a cut in home care funding, and we know that has nothing to do with needs, because the need of people for home care continues to grow. All of us have examples of constituents who have come to us and have been unable to access home care services when they need them, whether they're being discharged from hospital, whether they are needing services at home etc, because the CCAC is not in a position, with its reduced budget now in the second year, to deliver services and certainly not in a position to increase the services.

Despite the fact we know the need is growing, the budget has been frozen. We also know that despite the 1998 commitment that the associate minister referred to, a commitment to increase funding to the long-term-care sector by \$1.2 billion, the commitment to the long-term-care sector community side is a commitment that has been frozen. Of the \$550 million that should have flowed—and that's \$550 million of new money—to the long-term-care community sector over eight years, the government has managed to get about \$275 million out the door. Then that money stopped, hence the freeze in the budgets that we have experienced in the last two years.

At the end of April I met with the Ontario Community Support Association. It represents about 360 agencies

across the province. They deliver home care, they deliver Meals on Wheels, they deliver supportive housing etc. They told me at that meeting that they have received one increase in funding in the last nine years. It was 2% to base budget. So it's very clear that despite whatever promise was made in 1998 that the funding that was supposed to go to the community sector, primarily CCACs and other agencies like Meals on Wheels, supportive housing etc, that additional funding has stopped. It is not going out the door and that is clearly reinforced by what this association told me at the end of April.

We know the government is now freezing the home care budget; we've got proof of that. But the government has also made two other regulation changes which really do impact on people who need home care, which I believe will just force more and more people who could remain in their own homes out the doors of their homes to fill those 20,000 long-term-care beds that it clearly now has been demonstrated we don't really need.

Let me deal with two other reg changes. The government made a regulation change, implemented it, it was adopted in 1999, and told CCACs to really start to implement it in the last year or so, which says that if you as a client don't have a need for personal care, then you can't get homemaking services. There are many people who do not have a need for personal care, for personal hygiene, but as a result of not having that need the CCAC is now unable to provide them with homemaking service, which would be support for housekeeping, support for grocery shopping etc. I have a constituent who used to work for me when I was at the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines who is in a wheelchair, who doesn't need personal hygiene support or personal care, but because she is in a wheelchair has some great difficulty getting her housekeeping done and sure could use some housekeeping support and support for grocery shopping to maintain her in her apartment. She can't get that because of this reg change. That means that people who might be able to remain in their own homes if those kinds of supports were provided are not going to be able to and they're going to be forced into long-term-care facilities.

The other regulation change the government has made was done most recently, May 1, and that was a change around placement coordination services. That change means that those people who used to go on a waiting list for long-term care are now going to have the choice of which facility they go into reduced. They're also going to have their ability to be on that waiting list reduced.

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Previously a senior could have their name on a waiting list of up to five facilities. That's been reduced to three. More significant is the elimination of a person's ability to defer an offer of placement. Under the old rules, when a bed became available, it was offered to the person at the top of the waiting list, who then had the option to accept the bed or reject it and still remain on the waiting list. They were allowed to defer twice before being forced to accept a placement or be removed from the waiting list.

Deferrals can happen for any number of reasons: a health condition improves, personal circumstances

change or an individual is just not ready to give up their independence. Given that waiting lists for some facilities can be measured in years, it is understandable that many seniors want to plan for their future and have their name placed on the list for a facility of their choice early on.

The change the government has made doesn't allow them to do that. Under the new rules, deferrals simply will not be permitted. Should a person refuse an offer, not only will they be taken off all waiting lists, but they will also not be able to reapply for six months. When and if they do reapply, it's back to square one at the bottom of the waiting list.

I think the net effect of that is going to be that many people will be so terrified when their name comes up that they will accept a placement wherever it is, even if they're not quite ready to go, because they know that if they don't, it's going to be another six months before that opportunity arises.

Many seniors don't know what will happen to them in the next six months. Will their primary caregiver fall ill and not be able to look after them? Will their son or daughter move away from the community and not be able to provide the support they need? Will their own medical condition deteriorate, and then they will need to go into a long-term-care facility?

What's going to happen is that people who are faced with the choice are now going to have to make that choice immediately, and I suspect many of them will, because they will be so fearful that if they don't accept a placement they will end up in a hospital because no one will be around to meet their needs.

I think the government is using that change as part of its effort to staff up those 20,000 long-term-care beds that now have clearly been shown not to be needed in the numbers the government built them.

So we've got a number of changes that the government is going to make. Lack of funding for home care, the change in regulation that says if you don't have a need for personal care you can't get homemaking care and now this most recent change about placement in long-term-care facilities, I think, are really going to force more and more people into long-term-care facilities who could legitimately stay at home with the necessary supports. That has a number of costs we should all be concerned with.

Obviously it has a social cost. Forcing people into long-term-care facilities when they don't want to go and don't really need to go, but they can't get the supports that would allow them to continue to live independently, really gives them no other choice but to go.

It also has a financial cost. First, it is very clear that it is far more expensive to maintain residents in a long-term-care facility than to support them in their own home. The second cost has to do with something else that happened around the creation of these long-term-care beds, and I want to refer to this because this will be an enormous ongoing cost for the province of Ontario. What is different with the construction of these 20,000 new beds is that they will also be eligible to receive a subsidy

of up to \$10.35 per bed per day, payable for the next 20 years, to offset borrowing and construction costs. That is an unprecedented move on the part of the government.

Previous facility operators were not granted such a subsidy. But with the 20,000 new beds and the 16,000 D beds that the government said today it will upgrade, facility operators are entitled to receive that subsidy. That amounts to about \$75,000 of taxpayer money per bed over a 20-year period. The cost over the 20,000 beds plus the 16,000 that the ministry referenced today is well over \$200 million—I think that was the figure we arrived at—at least \$225 million payable over the next 20 years.

That change is unprecedented. That level of public subsidization of for-profit units is unprecedented as well. It's worth pointing out that about 67% of those new units went to the for-profit operators. That is an enormous cost that we will now have to pay for any number of beds which, it essentially has been demonstrated, we don't need. That cost is also going to decrease even further the amount of money the government has to allocate to home care.

In conclusion, there are a couple of things that could be done. This government should establish minimum standards of care in long-term-care facilities. New Democrats support the campaign on by SEIU right now to increase that to 3.5 hours per resident per day.

This government should reinstitute the requirement for nursing home operators to submit staffing schedules to the Ministry of Health on an annual basis.

This government should reinstate the historical split of the surcharges paid by residents for preferred accommodation and should also place a condition that the 50% that goes back to the operators has to go directly to patient care.

This government should increase funding for long-term care to deal with the horrendous conclusions that came out of the PricewaterhouseCoopers study. As it does that, this government should also put conditions on that funding to ensure that all of it goes into patient care.

Finally, this government should adopt my Patients' Bill of Rights because it would have set minimum standards, brought long-term care under the Canada Health Act, allowed for a complaints procedure and allowed for whistle-blowing protection for people who work in long-term-care facilities.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I am particularly pleased to join in today's debate because I think anyone who is watching the actions of our government and who has been following that since 1995 would have to know that we on this side of the House are absolutely and totally committed to securing the best quality of care possible for all residents of Ontario's long-term-care facility system. Indeed, my constituents of Scarborough Centre would have it no other way.

This is particularly the case when one compares the actions of the government today with those of its predecessors. The member for Kingston and the Islands fails to give credit where it is due. He fails to mention that the last provincial Liberal government did not create

a single new long-term-care bed for our senior citizens—not one. Liberals, when in opposition, paint themselves to be virtuous, but when given the chance to govern they failed our senior citizens miserably. It is no wonder, then, that the voters have rejected them in every election since they were defeated in 1990. Quite frankly, I wish the member for Kingston and the Islands would do something positive rather than rely exclusively on his colourful use of rhetoric that ignores the significant achievements of this government for our seniors.

I know he's in regular contact with his Liberal cousins in the federal government—yes, the same federal government that contributes not a single cent to the long-term-care needs of our senior citizens. In fact, Mr Speaker, you may remember—I'm sure you do—their little red book that they come out with before every election where they make all kinds of promises that they break. They promised a national home care strategy—didn't do it. They promised a national pharmacare strategy—didn't do it. They promised to scrap the GST—didn't do that. They promised to scrap NAFTA—didn't do that. I don't think it would be asking too much for the member from Kingston and the Islands and his colleagues on that side of the House to be a little more consistent in their criticism.

They could show—probably won't—that they genuinely care about our seniors and are not merely out to score political brownie points. They could do this by publicly calling on the federal government to financially support the initiatives of the Ernie Eves government to improve circumstances for our senior citizens, but I'm sure they won't.

1700

Prior to the firing of Paul Martin, there was hope, there was just a little glimmer of hope that the federal government would not claw back \$2 billion from the provincial treasury. With Paul Martin gone, the federal Liberals voted last week to continue to pressure the provincial government with clawbacks, notwithstanding that they only spend 14 cents out of every dollar for health care in this province. I think that's disgraceful when the national health care strategy envisioned a 50-50 partnership when it was created back in the 1960s.

This means that the federal Liberals threaten to force the provincial government to do less than we would like for health care, to do less than we would like to do for education, to do less than we would like to do for the environment and certainly to do less than we would like to do for our senior citizens.

I think this is shameful. If the members over there are truly sincere, I urge them to pressure their Liberal cousins in Ottawa to change their position of punishing the provincial government and the people we were elected to serve. I also urge them to pressure their Liberal cousins to come on board with the Ernie Eves government in making long-term-care facilities and their services a priority.

Compare the punitive approach in Ottawa to the recognition by the Ernie Eves government of the increas-

ingly complex care requirements of long-term-care residents. There are a great many initiatives that I am proud to support and I'd like to speak to some of those today.

Take, for example, the issue of compliance, which we've heard so much about from the opposition and the third party. Through the long-term-care compliance management program, the government is ensuring that the highest possible standards and quality of care are provided to residents of long-term-care facilities. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care continues to conduct annual reviews of long-term-care facilities. A province-wide tracking and reporting system has been developed to monitor those reviews.

The compliance management program consists of annual ministry inspections of all long-term-care facilities by the ministry's compliance advisers; inspections, as required, by specialists such as dietary, environmental and financial compliance advisers; and investigations of complaints submitted by residents, families and the general public.

All members of this House should be proud of the ministry's complement of 42 full-time compliance advisers who investigate Ontario's long-term-care facilities. When problems are brought forward or identified, facility operators are required to submit compliance plans to demonstrate their corrective action plan. I'm pleased the member for Kingston and the Islands is listening to this particular aspect because it really does go to the core of what we mean about being committed to delivering top quality care for our seniors.

If standards continue not to be met and/or there is a serious threat to the health, safety and welfare of residents, the compliance adviser can take independent action if necessary. On top of this, there are also sanctions that are available to the director under the Nursing Homes Act, and they include suspensions of admissions, withdrawal of funding, revocation of their licence—pretty severe action, I would suggest—the taking over of the management of the facility and of course, finally, prosecution. These are meaningful sanctions that reflect the government's determination to meet the long-term-care needs of our senior citizens. Furthermore, an ongoing professional development and training strategy has been developed for the ministry and compliance advisers involved in the inspection of long-term-care facilities. This strategy focuses on best-care practices, something of course we know the Liberal opposition doesn't relate to. It also focuses on competencies, multidisciplinary team approaches and consistency in interpretation and application of long-term-care facility standards, regulation and legislation.

The government's financial commitment to long-term care for our seniors, just based on those initiatives alone, I believe is abundantly clear. Since 1995-96, long-term-care facility funding across the province has increased by over \$541.6 million, to an historic high of \$1.644 billion. Again, not a penny of this comes from the federal cousins of the member for Kingston and the Islands. I ask him to

be consistent and to launch a public appeal to the federal government to correct this state of affairs, especially as the federal government is running such a large surplus—on the backs of the taxpayers in Ontario, I might add—and has yet to fully replace the money that they have slashed from health care across this country.

Consider these facts: As of March 2002, the province funds over 60,000 beds in 521 facilities, including 353 nursing homes, 100 municipal homes for the aged and 68 charitable homes for the aged. Just last October, the government renewed its commitment to our seniors when it provided an increase of \$30 million in operational funding for long-term-care facilities. Let me underline that this amount is in addition to the original \$30 million previously approved in the 2001-02 budget. This new funding will help to ensure the quality of nursing and personal care services in Ontario's long-term-care facilities.

I note too that the government has improved the way that people gain admission to long-term-care facilities. Effective May 1, 2002, our government implemented new policies for admission to long-term-care facilities. These changes mean that all bed vacancies in these facilities will be filled more quickly by persons who have greatest need for facility care. The changes will result in a consistent admissions process no matter where you live in Ontario, and the changes will also allow the local community care access centres to better manage the admissions system.

These changes are an important part of the government's larger strategy to put in place a quality health system in Ontario that addresses the changing health needs of the population. Certainly it is required as the population ages, and I am assured that the government will continue to make improvements as necessary in order to provide the best possible care for residents in long-term-care facilities.

As you can see, the Ernie Eves government is strongly committed to meeting the needs of people who require placement in long-term-care facilities. I say to the member for Kingston and the Islands that this commitment was clear as far back as 1998. In April 1998, the government announced an unprecedented \$1.2-billion investment in long-term care. The new provincial investment included the construction of 20,000 new long-term-care beds by 2004 to address the growing needs of Ontario's aging population. As of today, locations have been announced for all 20,000 new beds. At present, 4,698 new beds are in operation, more than 7,500 new beds are currently tendered or under construction and 1,469 existing beds needing renovation have been redeveloped.

1710

As part of its multi-year long-term-care reinvestment plan, the government also made a commitment to redevelop up to 16,000 beds in existing long-term-care facilities that require significant renovation in order to meet legislated structural standards. The time frame for the completion of this process is 2006. Given the fact that not one long-term-care bed was constructed in the 10

years prior to 1995, it's clear that the time frame that we are meeting is ahead of schedule and is much needed.

It's clear that the government is ensuring that Ontarians who need the services of long-term-care facilities will be looked after as quickly as possible and in the best possible fashion. To this end, the government introduced new standards for designing nursing homes. These new standards will promote a more home-like atmosphere for our elderly patients and their visiting families and friends. The emphasis is on home-like environments that will offer privacy.

As mentioned earlier, the government remains committed to ensuring that the right people are able to access the right level of service at the right time. That is why the government worked with its partners in the long-term and community care sectors to bring in new regulations, effective May 1 of this year, to shorten waiting lists for long-term-care facilities as well as to speed up the application process for patients, all having to do, of course, with improved quality of care. Indeed, these changes mean that all bed vacancies in long-term-care facilities will be filled more quickly by persons who have the greatest need for facility care.

It is abundantly clear that the Ernie Eves government is placing a very high priority on ensuring that those who have worked hard to make our province strong can enjoy a high quality of life as seniors in our great province. I value this goal, as my riding of Scarborough Centre has many seniors who count on us in this Legislature to ensure the availability of long-term-care beds if, and when, they are needed. I will not let them down.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): It's with great pleasure that I rise to speak on this motion by the member from Kingston and the Islands, Mr John Gerretsen.

The need for stable and appropriate funding for long-term care for our frail and elderly is especially important. It is important to me because of the large number of people in Sarnia-Lambton who have come to speak to me about the horrendous and heart-wrenching experiences of their loved ones in long-term-care facilities in the area. In the short time that I have, I'm going to read into the record two letters from two different people who wrote down their experiences in their long-term-care facility.

This one is from Virginia: "I am writing this letter on behalf of the family advisory council at Vision Nursing Home in Sarnia and because of my very dearly loved father who is a resident of the facility.

"Vision Nursing Home recently expanded from a 60-bed nursing home to 110-bed nursing home. The home is beautiful and well deserved. Our concern is that there is a serious shortage of staff to care for our loved ones. The payment made for our loved ones to live in a nursing home is quite substantial and we expect that the facility would be supported in their attempt to provide care for our residents by the government.

"An example of the work that these staff are facing is at breakfast, lunch and supper hours. For the unit my father is on there are 26 residents. My father is in a

geriatric chair and requires a mechanical lift with two staff to ready him for the day. There are only two staff on the floor to provide care to my father and 25 other residents. This means two staff to wash, dress, transfer, toilet, bring to the dining area, cut their food, assist to feed, return to their respective rooms and assist with toileting as necessary. The facility is highly understaffed. Vision has four units in total, each with only two health care aides to help 26, and one unit has 32 residents. How can anyone believe that this is acceptable?

"Not only are the staffing levels our concern in the area of care provision, but also in the area of our loved ones' safety."

I want to read part of another letter from another constituent, Paul. He is a resident and he said, "Many of the patients suffer mental problems—none severe but very trying for caregivers at the rest home. Lately there seem to be less staff and less time for every patient.... It seems that there is now a staffing limitation which, besides taking a toll on the remaining caregivers, deprives each patient of the care they need.... Here, we the patients feel the stress, on ourselves and the staff caring for us. This is a delicate job but when time is short, things become a bit abrupt and one must wait for help for longer periods of time."

All I wanted to say is this: our frail and elderly need time. They need care in the facilities, they need hands and they need time to care for their needs, not just beds to warehouse them. They need people to take care of them, and that's what the facilities don't have.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I certainly appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on this opposition day. I'm a little disappointed in some of the comments that have been coming from the opposition members.

I was listening to the member for Nickel Belt when she was talking about nursing care and actual numbers of hours for every patient, arbitrary numbers that have no relationship to the condition or acuity of the patients who may be in the long-term-care facility. It's so important that it be focused to the needs of the patient and that patients who need the care get the care. Those are certainly the recommendations we're getting from clinicians and experts in the field. But, typical of a socialist approach to it: "Oh, well, just make it flat and everybody will get the same. It doesn't matter what it costs. Let the taxpayers pay." That isn't what our government is all about. That's not what the Ernie Eves government is about. It's about looking after those who need to be looked after. Certainly, that's the direction it's going.

We're also hearing some of the opposition members talking about some mental conditions like Alzheimer's disease and suggesting that maybe the kind of care wasn't there. That care is there. There's a plan of care that is put in place for each and every patient. My understanding is that this is developed prior to their arriving at the long-term-care facility.

I just want to point out some of the things that have been happening, particularly with the Alzheimer's initia-

tives. In 1999 we announced the first comprehensive provincial study on Alzheimer's disease here in Canada. Those details include more than \$1.1 million for staff training; more than half a million dollars for physician training; more than \$1.8 million for information and education tools; over \$7 million for new respite services; and over \$4.55 million to support 50 new staff with expertise to support staff who deal with Alzheimer's patients.

Mr Speaker, while I'm talking about some of our elderly, do you remember back in the early 1990s when the NDP government of the day reduced medical care, health care, OHIP for our seniors, our snowbirds going south, out of the country, to \$100 per day? They reduced it from \$400. These are the people who have built this country and paid taxes, and just because they wanted to spend a few weeks out of the country, they were going to have to pay that extra \$300 a day for hospital care if they had to go to a hospital. That was what the socialists did. They took that away from people who were in fact very deserving. One of the first things we did when we took office was to return that to at least \$400 a day for hospital care.

1720

Another very important part we brought in was pneumococcal vaccinations, some \$14 million for the first three years and then \$1 million a year after that, to ensure that our seniors were vaccinated to help prevent pneumonia, not to mention some of the cardiac surgery investment, \$138 million put in there. Since 1995, some 24,000 more people have had open-heart surgery as a result of this.

We've heard a bit about the 20,000 beds. The opposition are saying, "Well, that's all they talk about, the beds that are out there." There are 20,000 beds. For 10 years, there wasn't a single long-term-care bed developed in Ontario. A few weeks ago, back on Saturday, May 25, I believe it was, I assisted with the opening of a 69-bed long-term-care facility in Cobourg. There are also a few beds there for the Landmark Assisted Living that went along with it. You can't believe how many people walked up to me and complimented the government on what they were doing with long-term care. It's just an excellent facility, and I know it's going to go a long way to helping people in my riding in Northumberland.

By the way, we'll be turning the sod and getting on with the construction of another facility, in Port Hope. I believe it's 129 beds. It's certainly over 100 beds, anyway, and that will be developed and opened in the not-too-distant future, in a year or so. That again will help with some of the pressures and the backlog in our hospitals. The lack of long-term-care beds has been a lot of the problem we've had in hospitals with the backlog in those beds. Of course, when the two opposition parties were in government, long-term-care beds didn't matter to them; they just didn't develop any new ones.

The other area I wanted to pay special attention to is the change we've had in our CCACs. I have to take my hat off to the Honourable Helen Johns when she was

responsible for long-term care and what she did with the governance in particular of CCACs. We were getting a lot of calls to my office about the kind of service that was occurring. Yes, there were a few calls at the time we made those changes and put in people who were going to do the job. I can tell you that once that got squared away and new people were there, I haven't had a call that I'm aware of to my office with a problem with the functioning of the CCACs. The two that service my riding, anyway, are certainly doing a very admirable job.

One of the things that was changed in there of course was the governance, as I've mentioned, under the Community Care Access Corporations Act, 2001. The corporate nature of CCACs was changed from non-profit corporations under the Corporations Act to statutory corporations to consistently apply all ministry policies and guidelines.

The new director, Fran O'Hara, my compliments to her in doing just an excellent job in that CCAC, and Nancy Hobbs, the new chair, is managing the board extremely well. My hat goes off to both of these women for just an exceptional job in looking after the CCACs in the Northumberland area, which of course covers Haliburton, Victoria and Northumberland.

Each CCAC board will establish a community advisory council to promote and enhance the integration between the CCAC long-term-care facility, hospitals and community support service agencies. Councils will be established in the near future.

There's also the placement coordination. The new regulations came into effect on May 1 this year. The revised placement coordination process will reduce admission delays, ensure more accurate waiting lists and will mean that all bed vacancies in these facilities will be filled more quickly by persons who have the greatest need for facility care.

As you can see, these are just a few of the many reforms that are underway. We are very hard at work and committed to improving the way Ontarians access quality services for long-term care. We will continue to make improvements to long-term-care community services so that Ontarians can continue to benefit from a strong, community-based long-term-care system.

I can assure you that the Ernie Eves government is indeed very concerned about our seniors and the kinds of facilities and services that are there and that the Eves government will guarantee that for our seniors.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): First, I want to thank my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, John Gerretsen, for bringing forward this opposition day motion, long-term care for the elderly. I know how much he is concerned and I appreciate the fact that we have an opportunity to debate and discuss this in a very effective manner.

In the short time I have, I want to draw your attention to the presentation made by the Ontario Long Term Care Association to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. They made some very important points here and I just want to emphasize them. I'm sure my colleagues have done so. Some of them are sort of

hooked up on beds, beds, beds, but we're talking about long-term care.

As you know, this organization "represents the private, public, charitable and not-for-profit operators of over 340 long-term-care facilities. These facilities provide care and accommodation to over 34,000 elderly men and women in virtually every community in Ontario." I think that's about 60,000 residents overall provided for by this government.

They made some very important points. One of the points they made was that "care funding is clearly inadequate to meet the needs of residents." I'm talking about an organization that people have great respect for because of the work they do. "Because care is, and has been, underfunded, our sector cannot fully assist government in achieving its vision of a long-term-care health system solution."

I think they must realize that. As you know, statistics have shown that as our population ages, we are finding that more people are over 80, a great percentage of people to be cared for. Therefore, more money has to be put into care and more interest and care should be put forward there.

As a matter of fact, they made an observation that "residents in Ontario's long-term-care facilities received" only "2.04 hours of nursing care." I was shocked when I heard that. It actually goes on to say, "This was the lowest of any of the other Canadian, American and international jurisdictions studied. Manitoba was 25% higher and Saskatchewan 50% higher." This is a very rich province, which has one of the highest revenues in Canada, yet this is what is happening here.

My colleague mentioned something I will take about a minute for. In his motion he stated that diverse cultural communities have been hit the hardest with the cutbacks. I just want to highlight one aspect of this. I remember when one of the Black communities put forward a long-term-care facility. Then we had this minister, Cam Jackson, at the time who said he was sensitive, turn down a submission that was one minute late—one minute late for people who have a great need for services. Members here talk about how sensitive and focused they are on long-term care. I was appalled at that. I know I have a short time, but I wanted to raise that to say to them how much that hurt the community.

In a diverse community, people in their senior years would like to be served with dignity and respect, but somehow this government does not address itself to that concern. Not only have they cut back money but, as you know, their programs are such that because of their giving back money to Bay Street executives and companies, we find they have not enough funds to fund long-term care. So who suffers? The other communities who need it most.

I just want to raise those few points while I'm here. I'm sure my colleagues will cover, emphasize and elaborate much more on the need that we have in Ontario.

1730

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I'm pleased on behalf of the residents of Don Valley to speak to the

motion today standing in the name of my colleague Mr Gerretsen from Kingston and the Islands.

Members of this House will recall the residents of Leisureworld who came down here to the Legislature to support the postcard campaign of the Ontario Long Term Care Association. In my riding of Don Valley East alone, I have received over 1,500 of these cards signed by residents, their families and by the members of the community who staff the long-term-care facilities. Their concerns are very much reflected in the motion that's here in front of us today.

I have to tell you that their concerns and the problems we're seeing in our long-term-care facilities are very acute in my community of North York. The province in general has, in any community, a population of about 12.5% aged 65 and older. In North York, our community is in excess of 15%. What does that mean? There are about 88,000 seniors who live in our community. Of those 88,000, over 36,000 are over the age of 75. What that means is that we have increasing pressure in our facilities to accept and have seniors as they move from the community to care homes. In North York, we have a total of less than 3,000 beds available to service a population of 80,000 seniors, 36,000 of whom are over the age of 75.

The members of this House will be interested to know that Baycrest and Villa Colombo in North York have the largest waiting lists for long-term-care placement in the entire province of Ontario. We all know how chronically underfunded community care access centres are, especially in North York, so when people in my area say they're concerned, they have very good reason to be. They can't get the care in their homes and they can't get into the long-term-care facilities. Even when they get there, their needs are not being met.

Let me tell you about a recent visit I made to the North York General Hospital, the North York Seniors' Health Centre. I met with Dianne Anderson, the vice-president of North York General. She would like to do a lot of exciting things but the government doesn't provide the money for them. Certainly, they can't be competitive in the salaries they pay their staff. They're losing their nurses because they're being paid higher somewhere else. They have an entire floor of the building they would love to open up, but the government won't provide the money to do that.

The lists are getting longer. We have terrific facilities that are losing staff. The seniors are waiting for care and their overall health is deteriorating. I can see why members of Leisureworld have come down here to speak directly to the minister. Frankly, they were insulted when the minister said the government is being generous in the amount of care they provide to seniors. Seniors see it every day in their lives and their family members do too. They don't want to see their quality of life deteriorate due to the underfunding by the Eves government.

They know, and their families know, that they're not alone. Families throughout Don Valley East are experiencing these critical shortages. This motion from the

member for Kingston and the Islands is a timely one. I don't see how any member of this House could not support the notion that Ontario should be one of the leading jurisdictions in the world within five years. That's an attainable goal, it's something I support and I hope all members of this House will support it too.

I'm going to yield the floor to my colleague from Windsor West. I hope all members will support the resolution.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I'm very happy to assist in ideally passing this resolution this afternoon that deals with the Long-Term Care Act and how we can better support our seniors who are in long-term-care facilities.

I congratulate the member for Kingston and the Islands, who has taken over as the lead critic for long-term care. What's important about what he said today speaks for those people who are in these facilities. I marvelled when I listened to the debate this afternoon by the minister responsible for long-term care, who stood up and said there are regulations that protect these people. The members will remember that he said, "All they have to do is call the administration." Then he said, "If that doesn't get them anywhere, they just have to call the offices and tell them they're only getting a bath a week, because that's against the regulation."

Let's just get this straight, Minister: are you really so out of touch with your ministry that you're understanding that, of the people who are there, 63% of whom have some form of dementia, these are the people who are supposed to trot down the hallway and complain to administration because they're getting maybe a bath a week or a bath every 10 days? Minister, let me get this straight. Are these same people, 94% of whom require assistance to eat, 95% of whom require some assistance to dress, supposed to go for a little jog down to the front desk and complain because they're only getting a bath a week? Get real, is all I can say.

There's a reason why Ontario requires more long-term-care facilities today, and that's because families are so much more mobile. It used to be that these people did stay home, that there were family members at home who took care of these people. That is not life in Ontario today.

This is a population that cannot advocate for themselves. That's why members are elected to the Legislature. It's up to us to see that the job is done on behalf of the people in our communities. These individuals won't be calling the administration of the long-term-care facility to demand another bath, so that the administration can say, "That would be great but we don't have the operating dollars to provide the personnel to do the job." Hence, the government comes in. This is an area that is funded by the provincial government. I marvel that the members across the House would dare to again blame the federal government on this issue, which is always the fallback position here. It's called the Ontario Long-Term Care Act. The responsibility is fully placed in this House. The resolution today talks about operating dollars. All the

members opposite today could do was talk about new beds being built.

Let me read you a marvellous quote which to me summarizes everything today. It's a quote by Donna Rubin, who is the CEO of the association representing the nursing homes. She said, "Even though 20,000 new long-term-care beds are being built," and we don't know when that's about to happen, "this does not address the underlying problem. We can have all the beds in the world but without adequate operating funding, long-term-care residents in Ontario will remain underserved."

We had a study that we brought into this House a year and a half ago. It was by PricewaterhouseCoopers. It was a study that was commissioned by the government itself. It wasn't what the opposition brought in as fodder for more questions in the House; this was a study that the government itself called for. What was so marvellous about it was that it was third party, it was completely credible. These people came in and told the government. Of course, we didn't access the report for some time. The government didn't want to release the results of the report. But what it said was that Ontario long-term-care residents received the least amount of registered nursing care, less than 15 minutes a day. It said that Ontario long-term-care residents received less than two hours per week of support from program staff. They have the highest proportion of both mental health disturbances and problems, and yet less than 6% receive professional intervention. More than two thirds of the residents have a restricted range of motion, yet less than one third receive exercise. Only 10% of the residents with rehabilitation potential actually received physical therapy.

For anyone who is listening to this debate today, imagine that it's your parents or your grandparents. They have the ability to be more mobile if they could have access to physiotherapy, but under this government, it's been removed. Let's make this clear. They used to get it and now they don't. This is a repeated theme of this government over the last seven years. We met children in the House today who were getting special-ed support and are not getting it today. We've talked to people in hospitals where services used to be delivered but are not being delivered today. Now we're talking about long-term-care residents who used to get physical therapy and are not getting it today.

I didn't hear one member of the government party speak about this lack and loss of services. We heard today from the members on our side about dentists and dental hygienists who could go into these facilities to take care of oral hygiene issues, which is essential. Anyone who studies geriatrics knows that the key is good dental health. It means the difference between whether people can eat by themselves or not. It means the difference between whether they're wearing false teeth or can keep their own teeth, or that they're being cleaned regularly when they're wearing dentures. This is paramount to good health. There are facilities today that used to get this kind of care in their facility and do not get this care any longer. The money is not there for these

administrations to provide this additional care in these residences.

1740

I ask you, should we even care? Would my neighbours in my riding of Windsor West care that they spent tens of thousands of dollars to build the Malden Park facility in my community? They built this place to be a chronic care facility. It was downgraded by the NDP but red-circled so it was receiving the kind of funding every day so it would run as a proper facility. Under this government, over the last seven years, every year it has lost more and more operating dollars so that today they can't provide those attendant services to keep those people more mobile.

You hear the minister himself say, "Just call the administration." How ridiculous is that? He's got the gall to stand in the House as the minister to suggest there are regulations to prevent this, that people should be getting more than these baths. Then he had the gall in the House today during the debate to actually question what I brought up in the House about how many baths a week he takes, as if I ought not to ask the question.

He suggests that we haven't supplied any names yet. Well, let me just suggest for this minister, if he forgets, that on May 22, the day that issue was raised in this House, there were many, many residents in this House. They came here, they were in their wheelchairs, they were here in the galleries and they were here to meet the minister. In fact, they went out into the lobby outside of this chamber after question period. Why? They were there to meet the minister and every single one of them receives one bath a week. That minister dares to stand in the House today and suggest that's not true. That is the reality in long-term-care facilities in Ontario. And I ask the question again to the minister, how many a baths a week does he take? How appropriate is it for us? Is this how we see treating our Ontario residents who are in long-term-care facilities? I say that's not good care for our residents.

I would suggest that we support the resolution today that suggests an operating dollar that is sufficient to give these people the care they need, keeping in mind that today, like never before, the people who are in these facilities are not mobile like they used to be. Those people are still being kept in their homes, as difficult as that is with the underfunding of the home care sector. Our whole goal was to keep people in their homes as long as possible, but now we're hitting them at both ends: they're in the long-term-care facilities and we're taking the services away. These are the same people who cannot advocate for themselves. That is the job of the Minister of Long-Term Care. I would suggest that this minister become an advocate, not a defender for his government but an advocate for people who need advocacy.

Mr Gerretsen: Being the last speaker in this debate, let me first of all thank all the members for taking part. But let me also say how deeply disappointed I am in the government members for, first of all, not addressing the issue that was addressed in the resolution. The resolution

is about as non-partisan as any resolution could possibly be. It doesn't castigate any blame on any government, any ministry or anything. It just deals with the facts. The facts are that your own funded study which looked at 10 other jurisdictions clearly stated that Ontario ranks last when it comes to registered nursing services for our seniors in long-term-care facilities and we ranked last as far as nursing and personal care services are concerned. That's a fact. You paid for that study. You then hid the study. The study indicates that we are last in that.

What the resolution merely states is that we want you to share in the vision for our seniors in Ontario. That is to give them the highest quality of life possible, and the way to do that is to work together, everyone, and for the government, whoever may be in power, to commit itself to making sure that within the next five years we are going to rank first in providing the quality of life that our seniors need. That's what this is all about.

As far as the postcards that we all received—and all of us received these—about 55,000 of them are signed. They were a direct result from this study where people are saying, "We are last? We are worse when it comes to providing nursing services than Mississippi, than some other states in the United States? How can that possibly be in a province that has as much to offer as Ontario? We've got to do something about it."

So the Ontario Long Term Care Association had these cards printed, which were signed by 50,000 people. What did those cards say? That government funding has not kept pace with the increasing resident need. "Current funding levels allow for only four minutes to assist with getting up, washed, dressed and to the dining room," for the average resident, "10 minutes for assistance with eating," per day, "15 minutes of programming" per resident "per day, and one bath per week."

I can well recall, less than two weeks ago, when the minister in this House said, "That's not possible." As has already been indicated, we spoke to at least 10 residents, and I've spoken to many other residents since that time, and they all confirm that they get only one bath per week, not because the staff people don't want to provide any more, but because the staff in all our long-term-residence facilities are overburdened and overworked. They're hard-working, dedicated individuals who simply cannot keep up with the ever-increasing needs our that seniors have in those facilities. That's what this resolution speaks to. As a matter of fact, my colleague from Sudbury received these cards today dealing with exactly the same resolution.

This resolution should be supported by every member in the House. It merely talks about the fact that within the

next five years our goal should be to provide the highest quality of care for our seniors in this province who happen to be in long-term-care facilities. They deserve absolutely nothing less than that.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Gerretsen has moved opposition day motion number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1748 to 1758.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	McGuire, Dalton
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Conway, Sean G.	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Cordiano, Joseph	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	Sergio, Mario
Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnett, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Martinik, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, Al	Wilson, Jim
Flaherty, Jim	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David,
Gill, Raminder	Newman, Dan	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 30; the nays are 44.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It being 6:01:39 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1801.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman
 Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr
 Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
 Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
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Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance
Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)		
Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)		Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Halton	Agostino, Dominic (L)
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Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Christopherson, David (ND)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	Kitchener-Waterloo	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)		Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité publique
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		Wood, Bob (PC)
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	London West / -Ouest	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Markham	

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mississauga East / -Est	Defaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs, chief government whip, deputy House leader / ministre associé des Affaires francophones, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Nipissing	McDonald, Al (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
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Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
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Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
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Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
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Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)		
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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of Ontario**

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**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 37^e législature

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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 12 June 2002

Mercredi 12 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 12 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 12 juin 2002

The House met at 1845.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There have been startling revelations just moments ago that there have been irregularities found by a private laboratory in Ontario's drinking water testing procedures affecting 270 waterworks over 67 communities in Ontario.

My point of order is this: I seek unanimous consent to have an emergency debate on Ontario's drinking water procedures here and now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is there unanimous consent? There is not consent.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RELIABLE ENERGY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA FIABILITÉ DE L'ÉNERGIE ET LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 6, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant certaines lois en ce qui concerne le secteur de l'énergie.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 10, 2002, I am now required to put the question.

On June 4, Mr Stockwell moved second reading of Bill 58. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I would like to request that the vote on Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector, be deferred until June 13, 2002."

It is signed by the chief government whip and deputy House leader, the Honourable John Baird. So be it.

HERITAGE HUNTING AND FISHING ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA CHASSE ET LA PÊCHE PATRIMONIALES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 29, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 135, An Act to recognize Ontario's recreational hunting and fishing heritage and to establish the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission / Projet de loi 135, Loi visant à reconnaître le patrimoine de la chasse et de la pêche sportives en Ontario et à créer la Commission du patrimoine chasse et pêche.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 5, 2002, I am now required to put the question.

On May 27, Mr Ouellette moved second reading of Bill 135. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I would like to request that the vote on Bill 135, An Act to recognize Ontario's recreational hunting and fishing heritage and to establish the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission, be deferred until June 13, 2002."

It is signed by the Honourable John Baird, chief government whip and deputy House leader. So be it.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: On two separate occasions now you've indicated that debate was to be resumed on two separate bills, and yet when the bills were actually called, no debate ensued. I'd like your ruling on that, Speaker. Is that correct? How can debate be resumed and no debate actually take place?

The Acting Speaker: I'd like to tell you that it is.

STUDENT PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ÉLÈVES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 30, 2002, on the motion for third reading of Bill 101, An Act to protect students from sexual abuse and to otherwise provide for the protection of students / Projet de loi 101, Loi visant à protéger les élèves contre les mauvais

traitements d'ordre sexuel et à prévoir autrement leur protection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): There are approximately two minutes of debate time. Mr Arnott, the member for Waterloo-Wellington, has approximately one minute and three seconds.

Applause.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): How will Hansard record that?

It is my pleasure to conclude my remarks on Bill 101 that I started on May 30. In the very limited time I have, I am pleased to remind members that Ontario students, parents and teachers have been asking for this strong piece of legislation for some time and they have been waiting, perhaps too long, for it to proceed.

Finally, after exhaustive consultations and careful debate we can move forward and give our province's education system the protection and clarity it deserves. As members will recall, the purpose of this proposed legislation is to help provide a safe environment for all students in Ontario.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): This is interesting, to say the least. But I just have to say that this is—

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): This is the bill. You remember, those teachers in the private schools who are not teachers—

Mr Bisson: Yes, now we remember. Thank you. Now we know where we're at. I was not expecting to have this opportunity because for some reason I thought we were at the point of ending this debate, but I've been given 15 minutes and I want to get on the record on a couple of issues on this one.

As I remember this particular bill, the government is trying to do what is essentially not a bad thing. I think all of us in the House here will support it in the end, but there is a bit of a double standard in the way this whole thing is being set up in regard to how we treat teachers who teach in the private schools that this government wants to fund by way of a tax credit and the way we treat teachers who are in the public sector.

The Acting Speaker: I'm sorry to interrupt, but I must. Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 29, 2002, I'm now required to put the question.

On November 26, 2001, Mrs Ecker moved third reading of Bill 101. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I'd like to request that the vote on Bill 101, An Act to protect students from sexual abuse and to otherwise provide for the protection of students, be deferred until June 13, 2002." It's duly signed by the Honourable John Baird, chief government whip and deputy House leader.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I

would seek unanimous consent for the terms of debate for Bill 81 as follows:

That one hour for third reading debate be allotted, with time shared equally as per the agreement at committee.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I hear a no. It is not agreed.

BUILDING CODE STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2001
LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LE CODE DU BÂTIMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 10, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement / Projet de loi 124, Loi visant à améliorer la sécurité publique et à accroître l'efficacité dans l'exécution du code du bâtiment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 11, 2002, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr Hodgson has moved second reading of Bill 124. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I'd like to request that the vote on Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement, be deferred until June 13, 2002."

It's duly signed by the Honourable John Baird, chief government whip and deputy House leader. So be it.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Baird has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1857 to 1905.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Baird has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 12; the nays are 5.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1906.

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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 13 June 2002

Jeudi 13 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 13 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 13 juin 2002

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

VISITORS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): I would like to bring the attention of the House to a school group from Gore Bay, Ontario, C.C. McLean. They are in the gallery up here. That is the school my four children attended, and we're pleased that Mr Wright is here. Even though he's retired, he has been coming here for many years, and having retired, he is back with his class today.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a real point of order, Mr Speaker: I am rising to give notice that later today I will be requesting leave to make a motion for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration. The matter relates to a genuine emergency which was precipitated by the government's failure to ensure proper water testing and reporting by a private laboratory, therefore potentially endangering the lives of thousands of Ontarians.

So I am giving notice of this motion for this afternoon, Mr Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ON SCHOOL BUSES ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002

SUR LA PROTECTION DES ENFANTS
DANS LES AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES

Mr Hoy moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses / Projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en vue de protéger les enfants lorsqu'ils sont dans des autobus scolaires.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Chatham-Kent Essex.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): Every school day, more than 810,000 primary and high school students and their parents put their faith in the owners and operators of Ontario's school buses. Every school day, parents trust the traditional school bus to transport their

children to a place of learning and to deliver them home safely. Every school day, more than one family's confidence is shaken by more than one careless driver. Too many drivers are approaching a stationary yellow school bus with no more consideration than that given to a yellow traffic light, and too many children are paying the price for such reckless behaviour.

In January of 1996, 17-year-old Ryan Marcuzzi, the youngest daughter of Colleen and Larry Marcuzzi, who are with us today in the members' gallery, was boarding her school bus when she was struck and killed by a car travelling 80 kilometres an hour. The driver ignored the bus's flashing red lights, extended stop sign and blaring horn from the school bus driver, who was helpless to prevent the impending tragedy.

Twenty-eight years ago, Ed and Ginny Loxton faced the same tragedy when their five-year-old daughter was killed by a reckless driver. I am deeply honoured that both families are here at Queen's Park today.

I'm also pleased to have Paul Gordon, manager of Hull Bus Line Ltd, Petrolia, here today to support my bill.

With the encouragement and support of both families, the Marcuzzis and the Loxtons, I present Bill 112 for second reading.

Since October 1974, five children have died in my riding at the hands of careless drivers who have ignored the flashing red lights of a school bus. Since 1985, 13 children have died and more than 80 have been injured in school bus accidents here in Ontario. Those children were going to school to prepare for their futures. Instead, their futures were tragically snatched away from them.

Ignoring school bus lights is not a rural Ontario-versus-urban Ontario problem. It is an Ontario-wide problem.

The last survey carried out by the Ministry of Transportation shows that when a car meets a school bus there is a better than one in 20 chance that the driver will attempt to pass illegally. The barrier to a conviction is identification. Current law requires that the face of a driver passing a school bus be clearly identified before charges can be laid under the Highway Traffic Act. School bus drivers and other witnesses can often identify the licence plate number, make, model and colour of the offending vehicle, but most cannot see the face of a driver long enough to make a positive identification.

Last week, I received a letter of support from a bus transportation company in northern Ontario. It reads, "Most of the problem is simply because our drivers were

unable to identify the offender. In one incident this year, one of our local municipal telephone companies ran our lights. Knowing that driver identification is necessary, the telephone company officials refused to identify the driver. Therefore, no charges under the current law. This is a disaster waiting to happen."

The province of Ontario claims to be tough on law-breakers and crime. It's time for the Ontario Legislature to protect its children by sending a clear message to drivers that violations of the law governing the passing of school buses will not be tolerated, and Bill 112 sends that message. Bill 112 attempts to correct the long-standing problem of identifying the drivers of vehicles who recklessly endanger children boarding or leaving school buses. This bill imposes liability on the owner of any vehicle that fails to stop for a school bus with the red lights flashing.

In 1997, in the midst of great publicity about my bill and pressure from parents and school boards, the Minister of Transportation introduced higher fine levels. But with no conviction mechanism, higher fines are left meaningless. Officers know they do not have the resources to follow 16,000 school buses around their routes twice a day. The local police chief from my riding said that for the safety of students, vehicle plate identification should be allowed to at least link some responsibility to the owner. The Ontario Police Association says my bill "is a positive step toward ensuring the safety of children in Ontario."

The excuse the former Minister of Transportation has offered for refusing to protect children is not founded. The minister says he cannot give police powers to school bus drivers, but bus drivers already have those powers under the existing law if they can see the face of the driver clearly enough to identify him. A police officer told me, "This is a red herring." He said there is no reason bus drivers should not have the authority to identify careless vehicles that endanger the lives of our children.

School bus drivers tell us that they are passed illegally twice per shift. There are 16,000 school buses in Ontario. At two violations per shift, I'll let the House do the mathematics. But you can see for yourself that the ministry does not have a hand on the problem; they barely have a finger on the pulse.

The principle of vehicle liability is not new to Ontario. All parking tickets and violations are issued under the principle of vehicle liability. Photo radar works on this premise. The collection of tolls along Highway 407 works on the same principle, as do commercial vehicle infractions. The precedent has already been set by this government by the implementation of red light cameras. Vehicle liability must be extended for the protection of our children.

In opposing the bill, the former Minister of Transportation, Mr Turnbull, said, "Vehicle liability targets the owner of the offending vehicle and does nothing to identify the aggressive driver." But while in opposition, Mr Turnbull cited the examples of Arizona and California, where the problem of finding the offending driver

can be overcome by having the owner of the vehicle file an affidavit as to who was driving the vehicle at the time. Mr Turnbull said, "If the owner cannot remember or does not care to file an affidavit about who was driving, then he or she will bear the responsibility."

1010

The government's double standard must end today. Owning and operating a vehicle remains a privilege and not an automatic right in Ontario. With this privilege comes responsibility and accountability. In instances such as those outlined in Bill 112, vehicle liability is both fair and just in asking the vehicle owner either to accept responsibility for operating their motor vehicle or to identify the driver who was operating said vehicle at the time of the violation so that the province can seek accountability.

Bill 112 does not attempt to unfairly penalize a vehicle owner. Only owners who fail to identify a driver will face a fine. Drivers will face the government's increased fine levels, plus the crown will be permitted to ask for application of up to six demerit points under the provisions of existing law. In either case there will be a conviction; there will be a real deterrent.

Bill 112 is not an attack on civil liberties. Ask the parents of dead children whose liberties have been breached when an offending driver is shielded by an inadequate law. Nonetheless, the bill has been carefully written under the exact same language as other government vehicle liability bills.

The law specifically states that when a vehicle approaches a school bus with red lights flashing from either the back or the front, the vehicle must come to a complete stop. It does not say, "Proceed with caution," nor does it say that the driver may proceed if he or she believes the road to be clear. It says, "Stop." But the law is virtually unenforceable without the changes in Bill 112.

It is time to give the same authority to the flashing red school bus light that we give to the stationary red traffic light. It deserves the overriding public interest because it protects a particularly vulnerable group in our society. That is why the bill has received such strong support and endorsements from parents, teachers, school boards, the Ontario School Bus Association, the Police Association of Ontario and many other local, provincial and national organizations.

Ontario's children are asking for protection. The public is asking for protection for our children. The government has seen this bill in this House before. It is today their opportunity to ensure that this bill will pass, and I ask all members on all sides of the House to pass Bill 112 to protect the children of Ontario who ride our school buses each and every day.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):
I'm very pleased to take this opportunity to address Bill 112, comprising amendments to the Highway Traffic Act that are designed to protect children who ride on school buses.

Before I came down here today I took my kids, as I do every morning, to the school bus. I'm very aware of what

the member is dealing with in terms of vehicles that go toward the bus and behind the bus. It's an area of major concern, obviously, to every parent and should be a concern of every citizen in this province in terms of respect for the law and driving safely, not only when you're in a community safety zone but when you see a school bus that has stopped.

I commend the member opposite for the work he has done in this area. He's been very vigilant, since he was elected in 1995, with respect to this particular issue. He is introducing this bill with the best interests of Ontario's school children in mind.

The government is always receptive to ideas on how we can achieve an even better record of road safety in Ontario. We know that the honourable member's bill would impose vehicle owner liability for failure to stop for school buses with their red lights flashing. I understand that under this bill all drivers charged would be required to appear in a court because the minimum fine is above the \$500 limit for out-of-court convictions, and we know that the bill requires fines that range from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for a first offence and from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for subsequent offences.

It would be useful to get a reaction, though, because there's one part of the bill that I think—I understand what the member is talking about with respect to the identity of the driver, and that's important because that is a very important issue.

One part of the bill, called "Limitation," subsection 1(12): "The owner of a vehicle shall not be convicted under this section of an offence under subsection 175(17) if,

"(a) the owner was not driving the vehicle at the time the offence was committed, and

"(b) the driver of the vehicle has been identified to the police by the owner."

That's going to be a very interesting provision in terms of litigation, being a lawyer myself, in terms of how to deal with that issue. I understand what he's trying to get at because certainly you have to deal with the identification issue if the driver is not the owner of the vehicle. I understand that issue clearly and I think that's going to be a very important part in terms of how we can deal with that.

It would be useful to get a reaction from the police community and other road safety partners as to how the proposal before us can help achieve its intent in practical and effective ways.

I'm proud to tell the House that the Ministry of Transportation and this government have already been on the right path to promoting the safety of our children when they ride on school buses. Consider, for instance, that Ontario has one of the best safety records in North America, and maintaining our excellent safety record continues to be a priority of this ministry.

Research shows that school bus travel is one of the safest modes of transportation. Ontario's 16,000 school buses carry about 800,000 students to school every day. Those school buses travel more than 1.9 million kilo-

metres each and every day, and the school bus drivers who operate them have passed stringent tests in order to do their job.

I can tell the honourable member that this government is already doing its utmost to promote school bus safety. For instance, the ministry establishes and reinforces safety standards and mechanical fitness requirements for vehicles; we develop policies relating to the rules of the road; we have implemented effective public education programs and resources for driver and passenger safety in co-operation with our road safety partners; and we set stringent driver licence criteria for school bus drivers.

For instance, potential school bus drivers must be a minimum of 21 years of age, they must pass strict medical and vision standards, they must not be a probationary or novice driver and they must have completed a driver improvement course and have no Criminal Code convictions within specified time frames.

The ministry also sets vehicle licensing standards and develops and delivers extensive, well-planned and thorough driver education resources that include the Official Bus Handbook. We establish additional vehicle safety requirements beyond the federal standards and develop and distribute the School Bus Safety Resource Guide, which provides information on school bus safety programs.

We know that other Canadian jurisdictions have vehicle owner liability provisions for violations of school bus stopping laws, including BC, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and the Yukon. Some jurisdictions also require third party witnesses to provide evidence.

I can tell you that we clearly have some of the most effective laws surrounding school bus safety in any jurisdiction. What this government did with respect to this issue was to take action. In 1997, we doubled the fines for illegally passing stopped school buses, regardless of whether or not there were bus passengers crossing the road.

We increased the maximum fine for a first offence from \$1,000 to \$2,000. The maximum fine for a second offence rose from \$2,000 to \$4,000.

At the same time, the Ministry of Transportation increased its links to our bus safety partners. The ministry works closely with them to promote the safe transportation of Ontario's school children and to raise awareness about safe driving around school buses.

Clearly, the safety of our children is a priority for the ministry. As a member, I keep close tabs with respect to school bus operators in my riding—Sinton Bus Lines, for example. I can tell you that it's a very important issue within my riding.

I want to assure the member opposite and all the people of Ontario that our government continues to take the steps necessary to ensure a safer Ontario for future generations.

1020

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I am particularly pleased to speak to this bill, having had a large number of children over the years ride school buses and having been a member of a school board.

As the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton has said, we have an incredible safety record here in Ontario for school bus operation. When you consider the number of kilometres that are driven every day, we are second to none in terms of safety. But how much energy toward safety is enough? Well, never enough.

In my time as school board chair and as a trustee, I on two occasions attended the wakes and funerals of students who had been killed in school bus accidents. One was one too many; two was extremely disconcerting for the community and for the families—families that will never heal over this, and I understand that.

Our school bus drivers are first-rate. I have always been convinced of that. The funding formula that provides the compensation significantly underpays what they're worth when we consider the job they do. We take a school bus driver, whom we will give a steel box that may have up to 80 students in it of all different ages. The driver is responsible for driving that vehicle, often at highway speeds, making certain its stops and starts are safe and maintaining discipline on the bus. History has shown us they do an excellent job of that. The problem is a factor they don't have control over, and that factor is cars coming toward them or from behind.

School bus drivers attempt wherever possible not to build up lines behind them. They attempt wherever possible to make sure the bus is stopped and the cars are stopped before they let a student out. But that's simply not practical at times. There has to be a certain faith that individuals will do the right thing and stop, but there certainly are people who go through and pass a school bus's lights by accident. That happens, but there's an increasing number who are late for work and in our rush, rush world are making the decision to speed past, gambling that they will get past and not hit a child.

I will be introducing a private member's bill to help those who are going through by accident, by having orange lights come on first, to alert the community and the other cars that the bus is about to stop before the red lights come on. This bill, put forward by our member, wants to make sure that no one wilfully goes past the bus, and I can hear the rhetoric about how much the fines will be and whether or not they're right. This bill must go to committee because that can be determined there. These are the basic principles that we need to protect our children.

There is some question about identifying the driver of the vehicle. I am not convinced that that is a problem. I would suggest that someone who doesn't know who's driving their vehicle at a particular time in fact shouldn't own a vehicle. There's a responsibility on each and every one of us. Although the government may present that it's a problem to know who the driver is and a problem in imposing the fine, let's think about Highway 407. It is a toll road that a private operator owns, but if someone drives through and uses 407 and doesn't pay their bill, the government uses all the power it possesses to collect that money for their friends who own Highway 407. You can't renew the driver's licence and you can't renew the

vehicle licence until that fine is paid. If we can put the energies of this government into collecting fines for the 407 operators, surely we can put the energies into protecting our students out on a highway. We have to look at priorities.

It will create some paperwork. If it prevents an accident, if it prevents an injury or, even more significantly, if it saves one young life, it was all worth it.

We are watching the busing more and more, particularly where we see children who perhaps require special accommodation on buses that take a little bit longer to wait for.

The climate of this rush, rush world is literally putting our children at risk. Our citizens understand the importance of that, and I urge support of this bill. We have to use every mechanism available to us. We trust the bus drivers to look after our children. We trust them to operate that massive vehicle. Surely we can trust them to identify a car coming toward them or going past them. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, if they can look after 80 children on a bus and we trust them with that, we can trust them with the whole package.

I urge support of this bill. If it saves one child's life, everyone in this Legislature will have accomplished something.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I stand this morning in gratitude to the member for Chatham-Kent Essex, who on a number of occasions now has brought this bill before the House in the hope that the government would see their way clear to actually enacting it in law so that the many parents, and children, across this province might feel safer when their children get on to school buses in the morning as they head off to their daily chore of learning and participating in the community and the society that we all hope they will grab hold of and run with.

As we look at the evolution of how we deliver education in the province, this kind of initiative becomes ever more important. It used to be that children were able to walk to their neighbourhood school. We had safety issues around that, but I don't think they were anywhere near as gripping on parents, as concerning to parents, as the issue we confront now with the consolidation of schools, the regionalization of schools and the moving of students now by public transit and school buses. I think we have to forever be looking at new ways to make sure, when our children get up in the morning and go to school, that they in fact come home at the end of the day.

I don't think any of us in this place would have to think too long or look too far for examples in our own community of very tragic circumstances, where parents sent their children out the door in the morning or walked them to the school bus, only to hear moments or hours later that an accident had happened and their child was either hurt very seriously or, in some instances, tragically killed. It's in those instances that communities are gripped with the necessity to do something to make those circumstances safer. But in the middle of everything that comes with that kind of tragic circumstance, it's often

difficult for any of us to be clear-headed and focused enough to do it immediately.

So here we are today with an opportunity, distanced a bit from a specific tragedy—although focusing for the moment in some important and small way with the family that the member from Chatham-Kent Essex has brought to the Legislature—in an objective way, each of us taking responsibility for those people, those families and those children whom we represent and speak on behalf of here, to put in place a law, a regulation, a regime that will go a distance to make people think, to challenge people, to let people know that if they decide carelessly, recklessly or thoughtlessly sometimes simply to whiz by a school bus, they will be caught; that it will be no longer appropriate simply because they weren't seen or we weren't able to identify definitely or clearly enough who was actually driving the car; that we will be able to, through some I think very simple and direct investigations, identify very quickly whom the car belonged to and ultimately who was driving it and who should be held responsible, who should be called on the carpet and asked why they felt it necessary or appropriate to speed in that way and put lives in jeopardy when they do that.

I don't think the member here is calling for anything extravagant or outrageous. As he suggested himself, there are other instances where in this province we do virtually the same thing in different circumstances. Why we wouldn't be able to do this, I really don't know. I don't understand the thinking of the government in this instance in not moving forward on this very important, and I think what will prove to be effectual, small step forward to protect school children in our communities.

When you consider the aggressive nature of the activity of this government when it comes to, or when it has been gripped with, the charge of reducing red tape in this province, how quickly they've acted to get red tape out of the way, get rid of regulations and I guess free up our communities from those considerations that over the years have been put in place—many times in response to very tragic circumstances in the workplace or on our highways or in our communities—to move aggressively to get rid of red tape and in some instances the tragic consequences of that activity.

1030

I don't have to remind anybody what happened in Walkerton when we got government out of the business of looking after our drinking water and the quickness with which the government moved in response to that, to actually put things in place. It leaves one to wonder why it is that in this instance we can't get the government to move on what is obviously a very important initiative to again protect people.

The government across the way is forever talking about how it is that they want to protect people, how they recognize that in our society today we need to have all kinds of things in place to make sure that our society is secure, and yet in this instance something that really isn't going to—that I can figure out anyway or see—cost them

anything of any significance in terms of financing of this—it simply enhances the ability of school bus drivers and the police officers in our community to actually do their job and find those people who are acting recklessly or thoughtlessly where school buses are concerned and haul them on the carpet and talk to them and in some instances to fine them and charge them, in other instances perhaps, if it's their first time—I don't know; I'm not going to for a second suggest how a police officer or a police service will deal with some of these things, but at least to have in place some provision that will allow us to identify very quickly what it is that we need to do to put an end to some of this very dangerous and reckless activity and behaviour that we see out there today.

I'm standing here today in support of and giving recognition to the member for Chatham-Kent Essex on this very important initiative and saying to him that our caucus stands shoulder to shoulder in challenging the government to move on this very important initiative to protect the children of our province as they go to school and come home every day.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My compliments to the honourable member from Chatham-Kent Essex for bringing this particular bill forward. It's certainly a very honourable intention and one that I can see where he's coming from and am able to support, particularly when it's related to the protection of children. I think there are a lot of members here who would be very, very supportive of this particular bill.

I think that we have here in the province of Ontario a tremendous record for our children's safety on school buses. There are minimal numbers that are injured, minimal numbers that are killed. Of course, any one is wrong; we can't afford to have that. But on record it is the safest method of transportation in the province of Ontario. Really, what he's bringing forward is to make it one step better, and I understand where he's coming from.

But what I think is very unfortunate here in private members' bills is the fact that here's a good idea, a private member's bill, but it's probably going to get blocked, typical of so many other private members' bills that come before this House, because of partisanship. When it comes to the last night in June and the negotiations of the day to get it through second reading, which I hope occurs in this case, it'll get turned down, like my Bill 33, the outside riders act, brought forward because of two young men who were killed in my riding. It was blocked by the House leader of the NDP back in June 2001. It was blocked again in December, and I expect it's going to be blocked again this time.

Here's an excellent bill coming forward with the concern of the safety of children, similar to my bill, the safety of people who may choose to ride in the back of pickup trucks, which we're trying to discourage. I think that's unfortunate.

Similarly, we've spent two nights—last night and the night before—on Bill 81. The third reading was blocked. Here's one on nutrient management that is desperately needed in rural Ontario but, again, is being blocked. I

think that's carrying partisanship way beyond the level it should be at. What's good for the people of Ontario should indeed be paid attention to.

Our government has been doing quite a bit to improve safety. As a matter of fact, in 1997 we doubled the fines for those who would illegally pass school buses. That's a pretty big discouragement. For a first offence it's \$1,000 to \$2,000 and for a second offence, \$2,000 to \$4,000. Those are pretty significant dollars for most people. I think when that kind of a fine is levied, there is no question that people are going to sit up and take notice.

I see programs like Bus Watch that are working very well. It's a co-operative effort of school bus operators, school boards and police workers, working co-operatively to identify those drivers who go by school buses. Congratulations on a program such as that.

Also, there are additional enforcement areas like having the police visiting owners of vehicles to issue warnings when they can't identify who the driver was but they can identify the vehicle that did illegally pass. Probably nine times out of 10, at least the owner of the vehicle should know. If he doesn't, he should have been aware of who had his vehicle at that particular time. So those warnings are effective—police laying charges, school bus drivers who can be positively identified, and also the increased police enforcement in problem locations.

Again, I come back to complimenting the member for Chatham-Kent Essex and look forward to the speedy passage of this bill to second reading.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I'm pleased to stand this morning in support of my colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex and this very important Bill 112.

We can't do enough when it comes to children's safety in this province, and this bill is a step to further address a problem that we have. We know statistically, for example, that on rare occasions—as rare as they might be—drivers seem to simply disregard the lights that are flashing and the stop sign that's out on school buses, and I think we have to do everything in our power to prevent that. That's why I support this bill and that's why my colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex has been so consistent in his effort to address this problem.

I think if we just stand back and say, "Look, we have a problem here. We want to avoid injury and death to our children as they either exit from or enter their school buses. What can we do about it?" this is a reasonable solution. We have red light laws now where the driver isn't necessarily identified and yet the owner of the vehicle can be fined. We have the situation, a very simple one, where you can drive on a toll highway and be charged and yet the driver isn't identified. So that shouldn't be a problem with this legislation. The fact that the vehicle can be identified, the owner contacted and given the opportunity to identify the driver should be enough. That is simply what this bill does.

Tragically, as I said, we've had deaths in this province because of drivers who just simply disregard the rules. Ryan Marcuzzi was killed in 1996. That shouldn't have happened. There have been children injured; that

shouldn't happen. This, I think, is a reasonable attempt to avoid this.

1040

It's been suggested in earlier debate that maybe the fines are too high. I'm not so sure the fines could ever be too high when it comes to the safety of our children in Ontario, but if there are members who feel that's the case, then the appropriate thing to do is to pass this bill, have it go to committee, and we can discuss some of the details of it. The bottom line is that we want to be able to take those drivers and punish them and to take those owners who let someone who is so reckless drive their vehicle and punish them. This bill even provides that we're not going to send an owner of a vehicle to jail if they weren't the driver. That isn't the case. We just want to put the public on notice that we won't tolerate this kind of thing. That again is simply what this bill does.

I don't think—in fact I can be reasonably sure—that anybody would object to an effort to protect our children. The degree we go to to protect them may be of some debate. Again, I'm one who says we frankly can't go far enough. If we have laws in effect that simply collect money, as I've said, from drivers on toll roads, surely to goodness there can be no objection to attempting to apprehend and punish those who are responsible for disregarding the signals and stop sign on a school bus. Children's safety, children's lives, are at risk, and we should take every possible step we can to protect them. That is what this bill does, and I think it does it in a very prudent way.

I would encourage all of our members in this Legislature to follow the advice of the member from Northumberland, which is that this is not a partisan issue; this is one about children's safety on which we all should agree.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Jeez, this is like *déjà vu*. This is not the first, not the second but the third time we're having this debate in the Legislature. Each time, this bill has been brought forward by the member from Chatham-Kent Essex. This is the third such debate we've had on a Thursday morning over the last number of years. You know what's interesting? The previous two times, just for our new friend from Nipissing, just so you know, even though the House passed the bill the first time at second reading and the second time at second reading, your government never allowed it to see the light of day at committee.

I want to say upfront that we will support this bill yet again because we think it's a good bill, but our words now are to the government. You have a responsibility as a government to allow the business of this House to go ahead. One of the things that frustrates all members of this assembly—because even government members have this problem—is that your government House leader, along with the cabinet, doesn't allow bills like the bill put forward by the member from Chatham-Kent Essex to go forward to committee.

Here's a bill that can speak to a real issue. We have with us today in the galleries the family of somebody

who died in just such an incident that could have been prevented by this bill. What do you say as a government to Mr and Mrs Marcuzzi, who lost their daughter, Ryan? You have an opportunity to do the right thing here. I know you're going to vote at second reading. I'll predict this: when we stand here at 12 o'clock this afternoon on this vote, the government will support this bill—no question. That's a given. But here's the real test: allow this bill to see the light of day at committee so that it can have the time it needs to make the amendments necessary and bring this bill back for third reading.

I think it speaks badly of this assembly when governments use their majority to block good bills such as we have here this morning, and the bill that's going to come after by Mr Martin from Sault Ste Marie that can make a real difference in people's lives. Just because it doesn't say it's a government bill doesn't mean it's bad. All members are honourable. All members work on behalf of their constituents, government members and opposition members. The government's got to take its responsibility seriously and allow bills like this to see the light of day.

I have said on a number of occasions that the problem we have in this assembly is it's dysfunctional. You have a government that has changed the rules over the years such that the government can do what it wants. It controls all the cards. It's a little bit like walking into a poker game—could you imagine?—where the deck is marked and the only one who ever touches the cards is the dealer. How in heck are you ever going to get a good hand at that particular game? Well, this is what you guys are doing.

So I, along with the NDP caucus, advocate that we need to change the way this assembly runs so that it does the business of the people of Ontario. This old, antiquated system that we call "first past the post" has got to die. It's got to die a peaceful death. It's been around for 300 years. It's about time in this assembly in the province of Ontario that we move to a more progressive system of electing members, such as proportional representation, so that when people elect their members, their members come into this House and have some ability to pass the bills that are important for their communities, because we represent who? The people. Not the political parties and not the Premier's office.

So later on this fall, we are going to put forward a motion in this House in regard to adopting a system of proportional representation so that we change the system of election. We would still elect people as we do now, but at the end of the day we'd look at the percentages of each of the parties and we'd adjust accordingly. So if the Tories got 41% of the vote, as they did in the last provincial election, they would only have 41% of the seats; if the Liberals got 30%, they'd have 30% of the seats. If we had 20% or whatever, we'd get 20% or some odd per cent of the numbers. What we've got now is a government that by way of 41% of the general popular vote in the last election has over 65% of the seats. It's nuts. So we end up in an assembly where a member like the member for Chatham-Kent Essex brings forward a bill

that can make a real difference and can't get it passed because the tyranny of the majority is ruling what happens in this assembly.

So yes, let's vote at second reading. Let's support this bill. I know we will. But the real test is going to come when we get to committee.

On a little bit of a brighter note, I do want to point out something else that's very important in this assembly today. Students from O'Gorman Intermediate High School in my riding are up in the galleries. I'd like us to take the time to applaud their welcome here.

I'll just say in the last two minutes I have on the bill itself that it's a good, well-thought-out bill. It's not as if this thing has not been given some good thought. The bill is very simple. Basically, it says that if somebody is caught contravening the laws when it comes to school buses, passing the blinking lights or doing something that would put in danger the lives or health of the children on a bus, if we can't stop the car, at least take the plate number down and report it. There's a mechanism to get back to the owner in order to get the owner to cough up the culprit who committed the offence.

I commend the member for Chatham-Kent Essex on bringing forward this bill. As I said, we will vote in favour once again, but the real test is going to come, that we have to get to committee.

I just want to say one other thing on a little bit of an unrelated matter, but it's just a bugaboo of mine: the condition of our highways. The government, in its privatization agenda, as you well know, has privatized everything that moves in the province of Ontario. We just found out yesterday what happens with privatization of testing of water. We saw that 60 communities are now at risk because we don't know, quite frankly, because the tests were not done at the private laboratory, if that water is safe to drink. Today we will be moving some motions in order to be able to deal with an emergency debate on that issue here in the Legislature. In fact, we're trying to negotiate that with the government House leader as we speak. But on the other issue of highways, we privatized the maintenance of our highways across this province. As people who drive the highways of northern Ontario, we used to be able to get from point A to point B fairly well when the province of Ontario, through MTO, used to plough the highways. Now when you drive Highway 11 between Hearst and Kapuskasing, you're lucky if you can get through when it's snowing. Why? Because the privatization hasn't worked. It costs more money and we get less service.

Mr Speaker, thank you for this time in the House. I look forward to voting and passing this bill at second reading and bringing it on to committee.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's a pleasure to rise today and support, first of all, Bill 112. The member for Chatham-Kent Essex has certainly made this the Holy Grail of his issues. I respect that and hope that this time it not only is passed but is actually enshrined in legislation. It would be a credit to the work you've done on that.

I have a few points. First, I want to be clear that over the years I have served as a school trustee and have been

very involved in the education issue. This issue has been around for a number of years—many, many years. It's not particularly new. What is new is that Mr Hoy has made this attempt at legislation. I will say, at third reading, it's quite a small bill modifying the Highway Traffic Act in a couple of sections.

1050

In my riding of Durham there are really six different school boards, I guess. There are the French and English, public and separate; then there's the Durham public and separate, the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board and the Kawartha Pine Ridge public board; and then the French and English as well. So there are a number of jurisdictions. I meet regularly with the boards and the trustees as well as the directors and I attend a lot of schools in my area.

In fact, the area is quite large. There's a large geographic component and, given that there's a large rural component, hence there is a lot of busing that occurs within my riding. I get calls from parents, primarily in new subdivisions, who are concerned about the walking distances and the potential risks to children. When they're on the bus—I've spoken with the school bus operators of Ontario, who I believe are supportive of this. Mr Hoy would have to confirm that. Rick Donaldson has long supported a really progressive program with respect to school bus safety. They take great strides in terms of trying to recognize the important part of training bus operators and indeed educating the children of their responsibilities to act appropriately and follow the instructions of the school bus driver, who has a really important job.

I think this bill pays some respect, when they identify someone who is not obeying the current law, by identifying the driver of the vehicle—it's almost impossible because they're going past the vehicle. To get the licence plate number is what this legislation does. If you get the licence plate number, that licence will be tied to the owner of the vehicle, and Mr Hoy is saying that the owner of the vehicle will then be charged. They won't be charged with the six demerits, but they will be charged with the fine. They can be exempted by identifying who was driving the vehicle. In my case—I have five children, all of whom have drivers' licences—I would be educating my children and certainly I would rat on them, if you will, or tell, because it is breaking the law.

It's important to recognize that in the current legislation, under the Highway Traffic Act, the school bus stop law, motorists are required to stop when approaching a school bus with red overhead lights flashing and a stop arm extended. The only time a motorist doesn't have to stop is if it's a divided highway with a median and the motorist is driving on the other side of the median. So it's very clear that the requirement is to stop, and that's what is important here: to educate the public. A motorist who fails to stop for a bus is liable for a fine of \$400 to \$2,000 for the first offence, plus paying a victim fine surcharge of \$85 to \$500, plus six demerits. Consequently, their insurance goes up.

What's really at stake here is the right of the individual, if their car was stolen or if their car was taken without notice by a child, those kinds of things, for years. It's not just this case of having to identify the driver, not the vehicle; that's the substantive problem the government has had in the past. But I'm confident that the enforcement mechanism my friend from Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, who is a lawyer and practises law—not while he's here, of course. I hope not, anyway.

The government has instituted a number of important initiatives. School bus safety is important, but community safety zones primarily were brought forward by this government to allow for zones around schools and park areas where children would be safe.

I can speak on behalf of my constituents of Durham. This is an important initiative and I thank Mr Hoy for bringing it forward.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I'm very pleased to stand today in support of the bill of my colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex. It has already been noted this morning that the member is recognized in this Legislature and across the province for his valiant efforts in this particular area on behalf of students.

I would suggest that the most important laws in our province, the most important laws that we consider in this Legislature, would be those that protect the most vulnerable in our society. I think it would be very difficult to argue that our children can be considered very vulnerable and valuable cargo in school buses. The member for Chatham-Kent Essex has recognized that as a legislator he has an opportunity and a responsibility to consider how we can, in our role as lawmakers, improve laws that are already in place.

There have been presentations this morning, certainly by members of the government, that within the body of the bill there may be some concerns about application and whether it in fact can be managed. I know that my colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex would be very happy to have the bill go to committee and hear the views of people across Ontario on how it can be improved.

Having said that, however, the member has also indicated a long list of constituency groups. They would be people who would have an interest, a vested interest, in this piece of legislation: people who own and operate school buses, school bus drivers, school teachers, school boards, police associations. He has indicated that the Police Association of Ontario is in favour of this particular legislation. So I believe that my colleague has been very comprehensive in terms of the work he has done to gain support and to demonstrate that what is proposed here today is very sound.

He has also indicated today that he would be very happy to see the bill go to committee so that members of the Legislature—there have been some concerns raised here today. Let's talk about them. Let's consider, if the bill needs an amendment, how that might happen so that it can be enacted into law and provide a measure of safety and protection for our children who ride school buses.

In my riding this bill is particularly important. I represent a rural riding, Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. I was a school board trustee, so I certainly have some sense and understanding of the significance of school bus transportation, particularly in rural Ontario. When I was a trustee on the board, over 80% of the students in our jurisdiction rode to school on a school bus. So for rural Ontarians certainly, it's important to know that we in this Legislature are taking our time to consider laws to improve the safety of 80% of the students in some of the jurisdictions that we represent here today.

I also wanted to touch on the points raised by the member from Timmins-James Bay, where he indicated that this is not the first, it's not the second but the third time that my colleague has had to bring this bill for debate on the floor of the Legislature, and it seems to get to committee and it gets stalled there. I really sensed that I heard some positive comments from members of the government. It would be my hope that they were very serious in suggesting that this could and should be a law in the province and that they will do all they can to expedite its journey to become a law. That of course means that when it goes to committee, that it is in fact considered and brought back to the floor of this Legislature so that it can receive third and final reading. That is the challenge, I say to the government members this morning. You may pass it this morning at second reading, but I implore you to do all you can to ensure that it receives third and final reading.

Mr Bisson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know that everybody is watching this debate intently this morning and didn't get a chance to watch the match between Italy and Mexico. Just to let you know, Italy is in the finals. They tied the game, and Croatia lost. So, viva Italia.

The Acting Speaker: Of course, it is not a point of order but it is useful information.

The member for Chatham-Kent Essex has two minutes.

Mr Hoy: I want to thank those who spoke to this bill this morning: the members from Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, Prince Edward-Hastings, Sault Ste Marie, Northumberland, Essex, Timmins-James Bay, Durham, Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, and I hope I have included everyone there.

I want to respond to some of the government's comments, and particularly in one regard to the fine levels. I want to say to the government members opposite that you raised the fine levels some time ago. We can discuss what the appropriate fine level is in committee. I think that would be excellent.

1100

The point I'm trying to make is that the fine levels are a moot point when you have an inadequate law that has no conviction mechanism. You can make them as high as you want or as low as you want, but you're not apprehending the many persons who pass school buses illegally, endangering the lives of our children.

You do, however, as a government, I say to the members opposite, use vehicle liability to collect money on the 407. You use it to collect money in a safety-featured way with red light cameras. Let's have vehicle liability to protect the 810,000 children who ride over 16,000 school buses here in Ontario twice daily. Some routes are more than that: three and four times a day.

The people clearly know what the law is because I have had reports from persons who would know that people are passing school buses illegally shielding their faces because they know the driver has to identify the face of the driver. They're passing school buses with their hands up to their face to shield themselves. They also, the bus drivers, have difficulty seeing persons through blacked-out windows in speeding cars. When a car is passing a bus from front to back, it's virtually impossible to see people passing school buses illegally while the bus driver is watching its most cherished cargo, the children of our schools.

Let's pass this bill. Let's pass it now.

The Acting Speaker: The time allotted for this ballot item is now expired. We will deal with the questions at 12 o'clock noon.

**ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT
PROGRAM AMENDMENT ACT
(FAIRNESS IN DISABILITY
INCOME SUPPORT PAYMENTS), 2002**
**LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
LE PROGRAMME ONTARIEN DE SOUTIEN
AUX PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES
(ÉQUITÉ DANS LES VERSEMENTS
DU SOUTIEN DU REVENU)**

Mr Martin moved second reading of Bill 118, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 to require annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support payments / Projet de loi 118, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées en vue d'exiger des rajustements annuels relatifs au coût de la vie en ce qui concerne les versements du soutien du revenu.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Sault Ste Marie has 10 minutes.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I wanted to start by first recognizing the work done by Sarah Jordison and Trish Hennessy in getting this piece of work, this discussion, on the floor today.

I'd like to recognize as well all the people who have come here today from across Ontario to support this bill. People have come all the way down from Parry Sound-Muskoka, they're here from Hamilton, Brampton, Oakville, Oshawa, Whitby, and the list goes on. Every community in this province has an interest in this bill. They are here today because this bill is so important to hundreds of thousands of disabled people in this province and all the people who love and care for them.

I'd like to thank all the people in community organizations who have worked with us to bring this serious

issue to the forefront of the minds of the people of Ontario: Barbara Anello, the director of the DisAbled Women's Network Ontario; the Ontario Association for Community Living; the community living associations in Haliburton, London, Timmins and Trenton, just to name a few; the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario; John Fraser and the Income Security Legal Clinic; the Ontario Social Safety Network; Helen Henderson; the Elementary Teachers' Federation; Maria Kohan. I wish I had time to name the many people who have been so helpful over the last number of months.

As most of you know, a year and a half ago I stepped down from the Speaker's chair because I could no longer preside over a Legislature that would not debate the issue that affected the most vulnerable people of our society. Since then I've toured the province with the People's Parliament on Poverty to hear what people without a voice had to say about this issue. We're here today in response to one of the serious issues they raised: people with disabilities are being forced to live in poverty, and that's a shame, particularly in a province as rich as Ontario.

Disabled people who are unable to work and must rely on the Ontario disability support program are being forced to live significantly below the poverty line. The government has no more fundamental responsibility than to look after those most vulnerable in our society, and right now they're failing in that charge.

I stepped down from the Speaker's chair because I wanted to bring their voice to this Parliament. I'm here today doing that. It's time for this government to listen to the many people who have come and are here today supporting this bill, both here in the House and in committee room. I'm also here speaking on behalf of literally thousands of people across the province interested in watching what the government will do today on this bill.

Last fall this government made a big hoopla out of the release of their vision statement for people with disabilities. With it, they professed to be champions for the disabled. The vision is a good one; it states that they believe that the dignity and worth of all Ontarians should be respected and valued, and that they believe people with disabilities have the right to participate fully in every aspect of life in our province. These are great words. But that's all they are—just words. Today is the day that we put those words to the test. Today is the day that this government must actually prove its commitment to all the disabled people of Ontario.

Today, as I stand here, those words ring very empty for 192,000 disabled persons across this province—Ontarians and their families, friends and caregivers. This group of disabled people are unable to work and are forced to depend on the Ontario disability support program, otherwise known as the ODSP. For them, this vision statement is nothing more than a slap in the face. They see little dignity in being forced to live below the poverty line. They find it impossible to participate fully in every aspect of life when they don't have enough money for food, clothing, transportation or even many of

the medications or supplies that they need. A single person living on ODSP receives a maximum of \$930 per month, a yearly income of \$11,160. According to Statistics Canada, this is significantly below the poverty line, particularly for those living in our urban centres where they would need an additional \$7,211 per year just to reach the poverty line.

I ask every member of the government, every member of the House, to imagine trying to live on \$11,160 a year. Now try to imagine living on \$11,160 a year while still having to cope with a disability. No one deserves to live like this; no one should have to live like this.

People living on disability benefits have had no increase since the Conservative government took office in 1995, and yet we've lived through some of the best economic times in our history. Since they got elected, the cost of living has gone up by 12.8%. This means that not only have they not had an increase, but that \$11,160 is worth \$1,438 less than it was worth in 1995. Over that same period of time, rents in this province have gone up over 20% in most of Ontario's cities. For many of those who live in Ontario's urban centres, their rent takes up almost all of their ODSP cheque.

Did you know that 15% of people using food banks are on ODSP? And those are just the ones who are able to access food banks, food banks that are close enough to get to. We cannot, we must not, let this continue. It is our responsibility to make sure that people with disabilities aren't falling through the cracks. My bill proposes to index ODSP to the cost of living so that every April 1, people with disabilities get the increase they desperately need to maintain their income level. All this bill proposes is to stop people with disabilities from falling further into poverty.

1110

Quite frankly, this bill really isn't enough; it's a scratch on the surface. But since the government whip tried to have this bill ruled out of order on Tuesday, I know what would have happened if I'd tried to introduce the legislation that is really needed here.

People who are already living with a disability do not deserve a life sentence of poverty. All I am asking this government to do today is to stop making their lives worse. I ask, I beg—whatever it takes—the government on behalf of the 192,000 disabled people in this province and all of their families, friends and caregivers, please, today, you have an opportunity. You're hearing the voice of people who are disabled and living in poverty in this province, here present and across the province, asking you to vote in favour of this bill so that we can stop once and for all, at the very least, making the lives of these very important citizens of our province any worse than they already are.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill 118, An Act to amend the Ontario Disabilities Support Act, 1997 to require annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support payments. I just want to address for a moment that that is not what the bill does. I think it's very important and I

welcome all the people who are here today to hear the debate, but as was ruled by the Speaker yesterday, the bill if passed would permit, not compel, the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make a regulation which, if made, would constitute a charge on the consolidated revenue fund. So I think it's very important to recognize that this bill in fact does not do what it is purported to be doing in the title of the bill.

But we all want the best advantage for those in our society who are disabled. This year the province and municipalities will spend an estimated \$2.1 billion to provide income support and related benefits for the families on ODSP. That's our government's strong commitment to the disabled community.

It's also worth noting that income support for single persons with disabilities remains the highest among all the provinces in Canada. You will also know we changed the support program from the family benefits program to the Ontario disability support program. This again was to show our commitment as a government to the disabled community.

There were a number of changes made in the Ontario disability support program to again help the disabled community. The program recognizes that persons with disabilities can and do want to work. Persons with disabilities are no longer labelled unemployable. Under the ministry's supports to employment program, the amount of earnings that a family can keep without deduction was increased.

The Ontario disability support program also provides a broad range of employment supports to assist people with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. Improvements were made on the ceiling of assets that they were allowed to receive and maintain during the time they were receiving the support.

Under ODSP, workers' compensation awards, inheritances and other compensation awards were allowed to be taken in without seeing a decrease in the support they receive.

The disability program also provides incentives for family and friends to participate in providing additional support. For example, recipients are allowed to keep an amount of up to \$4,000 a year in the form of gifts for any purpose from any source.

These improvements were made in response to concerns raised by people with disabilities.

In addition to income support, individuals and families under ODSP also have access to an extensive menu of benefits including drug coverage; dental, vision and hearing service for adults and dependent children; diabetic supplies, surgical supplies and dressings; medical travel and transportation; consumer contributions for assistive device and eligibility assessments under the assistive devices program; batteries and necessary repairs for mobility devices; winter clothing allowance for dependent children; back-to-school allowance for dependent children; community start-up benefits—\$1,500 for recipients with dependent children; guide dog benefits; employment start-up benefits; upfront child care costs; northern

allowance—\$135 and up based on the number of dependants; chronic care items; necessary home repairs; and personal needs allowances to people who reside in chronic care facilities, nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, homes funded under the Homes for Special Care Act and facilities under the Developmental Services Act.

Much is being done. Would we all like to see more done for the disabled? Of course, we all would. But this bill is not a way to do it.

The Acting Speaker: I would like to bring members' attention to the members' gallery west. We have with us a former member, Drummond White, from the former riding of Durham Centre.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind those in the galleries that we appreciate your being with us, but I need your assistance because we cannot have any kind of demonstration or applause and the like. That behaviour is reserved for down here. Thank you.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Let me begin by saying how pleased I am to participate in this very important debate today. As a long-time proponent of a cost-of-living adjustment for all Ontarians who must somehow survive on the present and wholly inadequate Ontario disability support program, I congratulate my colleague from Sault Ste Marie for bringing this legislation forward.

I vigorously support this legislation, and I would like to call on all members of the House to look deep within their hearts as they ask themselves how they could possibly not support this extremely reasonable and simply decent cost-of-living adjustment.

It's difficult to understand why we even have to justify this request. Certainly everyone in the Legislature knows how costs for just about everything have gone through the roof over the past six years. We know that costs for shelter have increased dramatically across the province, particularly in large urban centres such as Toronto.

We also know that the cost of food has increased at an alarming rate over the past several years. As a recent report by the Daily Bread Food Bank confirmed, when the already low incomes of disabled people fail to keep up with the cost of living, the food budget is often the first item to be cut. Food bank use has increased dramatically for ODSP recipients, and what is clear is that the deterioration of real incomes for ODSP recipients is an unsustainable situation that leads not only to food bank use, but to the brink of homelessness.

I often find myself harkening back to the diet that former Community and Social Services Minister Tsubouchi trumpeted back in 1996—the dented tuna debacle, as all members will recall. Even if one accepted this particular food plan as an acceptable diet, which I must say I didn't, the cost of that particular set of items has increased substantially since that time. In fact, last year we went out and bought those exact items at a large no-name discount food chain and discovered the prices had risen by over 20% since the minister's Spartan diet was first unleashed on the poorest citizens of our province.

Is it unreasonable for us to expect government members to support this legislation? I certainly don't think it is, and quite frankly I believe it is the least we can do to begin to bring some measure of fairness to a deeply flawed program. And what a deeply flawed program this is; I wish I had more time today to describe how painfully user-unfriendly the ODSP truly is.

At a forum held in Thunder Bay last week, co-sponsored by the Kinna-Aweya Legal Clinic and the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, we heard from a number of front-line workers about the appallingly bureaucratic and cruel process applicants must go through in order to access benefits for which they are clearly eligible. How can this government speak about the generosity of this program when the system is set up in such a manner that the vast majority of applicants are summarily turned down for assistance when they first apply? While a large number of these applications are eventually granted through the appeal process, this only happens with the enormous help of dedicated legal aid clinic workers such as those who work at Kinna-Aweya, as well as the concerned front-line workers who attended this forum.

1120

How good-hearted is a system that is set up to cut off applicants rather than help them through the process? Without this help, people with mental health issues, learning disabilities and literacy problems, and homeless people, have to get through this enormously complex process themselves. The ministry which administers the program provides no assistance whatsoever. The municipal social services offices which do the financial assessment are not allowed to help the applicants with the forms. The forms that the doctors must fill out are so bizarrely complex that many doctors have difficulty finding the time to fill out the application. And what do you do if, like 40,000 people in Thunder Bay, you don't have a family doctor?

We need a separate and thorough debate on how this program must be simplified, made truly accessible, and turned into a program that is not geared to turning away our most vulnerable people from the assistance they clearly need and deserve. But the important aspect of today's debate is that we have a real opportunity to make a positive difference for those needy individuals who are presently on ODSP. Today I call on—indeed I beg—the members of this Legislature to support Bill 118 as put forward by Mr Martin. It is a necessary adjustment that is long overdue and one that, regardless of the outcome of today's vote, I will continue to fight for and support.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I am quite proud to stand in the House today and support this motion from our member from Sault Ste Marie, Mr Tony Martin. People know Tony as a person who has done a lot of work not only in his life here in the Legislature over the last 12 years on behalf of many people in the disabled community and generally the community in need, as I would describe it, but has also worked within the church and various organizations before that and

brings a lifelong experience of really understanding what people go through. I think far too often members of the Legislature tend to come from backgrounds that are pretty well-to-do. They don't have to worry about putting food on the table or paying their bills at the end of the month and maybe don't quite understand in a real way, as the member from Sault Ste Marie does, the difficulty people face each and every day of their lives.

The bill that he puts forward is a very simple move that the government can adopt. As I said in the previous debate, I would expect—I would hope—that the Tories will support it. We're going to pray at this point that they do. But if we do pass this bill at second reading, we want this bill to go to committee, and I would repeat the comments I made earlier today that the government doesn't allow members to get their bills off to committee. That sometimes is quite unfortunate, because it's good public business that we do here on Thursday mornings. Probably the most non-partisan part of our week is private members' public business, and I think there is something to be learned from that.

His bill is quite simple. It moves forward the idea that we should at least tie the cost-of-living index to the people who are on pensions from the Ontario disability support program. We know, for example, that over the past number of years there has been an erosion in the amount of money that people receive, because since they carved the ODSP out of the welfare system there has not been an increase in those basic benefits. So people who are on benefits haven't had any kind of increase and find themselves in a situation where they've actually gone back. When you look at the cost of living, people are actually making 20% less today on an ODSP payment than they did back when the Tories first came to office. To try to pay your rent, try to pay for your groceries and try to just stay alive on those benefits is very difficult. Imagine living in the city of Toronto. I don't know how people do it, quite frankly. I know it's hard enough in Timmins, Kapuskasing and other communities.

I have a very close relationship with a number of people who are on disability pensions within my riding. My office's and my reputation as working with people, trying to advance their causes when it comes to disability issues, everything from basic pension needs to other issues, is well known in our community. I just want to signal that there are a lot of good people out there such as the Timmins accessibility committee, who I know are watching today, who are very much interested in this debate. They represent a community within the city of Timmins that is often forgotten when it comes to the really essential things such as making our community accessible to people with disabilities. I sit with them every month—if not myself then somebody from my constituency office is there each and every month at their meeting—and one of the issues we've talked about is this very issue. I have said to them that our member from Sault Ste Marie is bringing forward a motion and that motion is here to give them some breathing space when it comes to the amount of money they receive every month.

so that at the very least their benefits could be tied to the cost of living.

I also think of other groups that I've been dealing with within the community, the Canadian Mental Health Association and others, who are bringing a message back to us here through me today: please support this bill, because quite frankly it is very difficult for people to make do.

The only other point I want to make on this, and I think it's important, is that I want members of the assembly to think of what it would be like to try to live on the amount of money that we get on ODSP. A single person living on ODSP would get a maximum of 930 bucks a month. That is not a heck of a lot when you really take a look at it. By the time you pay your rent, your rent has pretty well chewed that up and it leaves you a very little bit of money to be able to buy groceries. Far too often we have people coming into our constituency offices saying, "You know, I'm trying to pay my rent. I've had to disconnect my phone, I've had to disconnect my cable, because I can't afford those things." By the time they pay their rent, by the time they pay their bus pass to be able to get around to the programs that support their health care needs and their social needs, and by the time they pay for their groceries, there's nothing left. So they either don't have a bus pass or don't have cable or don't have a phone, or they don't have all three, depending how expensive the rent is. We know this government has not been very good in the public sector when it comes to not-for-profit housing and subsidized housing. Not one new stitch of units has been built since this government has come to office, and it's more difficult for people to get apartments that are geared to income. So they're bringing a message here: "Listen, you've got to pass this because we need some respite."

I only want to give one other story, because I know the member from Trinity-Spadina is going to say something. I'm just going to relate one story I had of a woman who came into my office. Quite frankly, it made me cry when this woman came in. She comes in, sits down in my office and says, "Gilles, I'm really having a hard time. I'm on a disability pension. My husband left me because of my illness. I'm alone. Here I am having to live on this measly little pension that we get. They want to shut down the hydro. I've already shut down the phone. I've already shut down the cable. Yesterday morning I had to send my granddaughter home." I said, "What was that all about?" She says, "My granddaughter tried to climb up on a chair to make herself a peanut butter sandwich. There was no peanut butter and I couldn't afford to buy her any." I tell you, even today it hurts me, because here is a proud woman, a woman who basically because of her circumstance, because she developed MS and is unable to work, her husband left her, she's on her own, can't afford to buy peanut butter for her granddaughter.

So on behalf of the granddaughter and on behalf of all grandchildren and people on disability, please pass this bill, because this is about real issues; this is something that would make a big difference in their lives.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I do believe that improvements to the Ontario disability support program are needed; however, I also believe that Bill 118 is flawed. The effect of Bill 118 is an unnecessary duplication of provisions that already exist. The minister has the ability to change ODSP payments by regulation.

It is important to remember that Ontario residents with disabilities have the highest rate of income support in the country. The government respects the dignity of persons with disabilities and has removed the stigma of "permanently unemployable," allowing people to be supported when they need it the most. But we can do more.

For example, increasing the asset ceiling would improve the financial security of people with disabilities. It's currently about \$7,500 for a couple. There are many exemptions, but I believe that could be increased. Increasing the amount of earnings that can be made while still receiving full benefits—and that is currently about \$235 a month for a couple—is a practical way to allow persons with disabilities to improve their personal circumstances. I have constituents whom I have met with who are receiving ODSP payments who want to be able to earn more money, and I believe we should be helping and encouraging them to do so.

Continuing limited benefits, such as the drug benefit plan, for people with chronic disabilities would remove a barrier to pursuing gainful employment. I have constituents who fear the loss of the drug benefits available under ODSP far more than the loss of income support. The cost of permanent medication is a huge disincentive to seeking alternative employment and striving for independence.

I will continue to work on behalf of my constituents with disabilities. I believe we need to make changes to the ODSP that will result in meaningful and tangible improvements, that will remove barriers to security and self-sufficiency.

1130

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Over the years, my wife and I have fostered quite a number of children. Most of them come and are able to fit into the family, but some come whom we have to teach the very basics of what is the right thing to do—holding the door open for a person behind you is just a very basic thing.

Doing the right thing for people on disability is just a basic human characteristic that we've not seen demonstrated over there. This government has taken and sentenced Ontarians with disabilities to absolute poverty. Do not tell me that disability in Ontario is the highest unless you're prepared to live on \$930 a month, and I challenge you to do that. If you truly think the wording in the member from Sault Ste Marie's bill is wrong, then just do it. You don't need the bill. You have the power to change it instantly. You know as well as I do that the problem with this bill is that it doesn't go far enough, and it doesn't go far enough because you won't let it go far enough, not because of the member for Sault Ste Marie.

This bill should be retro. While we have seen them suffer a loss in purchasing power that's significant, this

government bills taxpayers for booze. Get your priorities right. Here's how ODSP works in Ontario right now. You apply; you are refused. You go to an arbitration process that takes months and months, forcing people to find other resources or go on welfare when they do not belong in that area. They are entitled to ODSP. When they finally get the money, it's inadequate. If they try to better themselves, it is clawed back.

I know you're reading great scripts over there, but I challenge you to talk to your constituent assistants. Call a meeting in your riding and talk to people on ODSP. I can assure you that what you'll be hearing from them is not what you're hearing from your speech writers.

It doesn't matter what you say. People don't care what you say, they don't care what politicians say; they care what we do, and we have given short shrift to people on disability who don't choose to go on it. I've not yet had one person come into my office and say, "I think I've got a scam. I'm going to lose my eyesight and then I'll get money from the government." No one chooses to go on it. They want dignity and they want to work. They want to be able to dress their children like the rest of the children in their community. They want access to transportation and baby food. They want access to their full rights.

Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals do not believe that there are classes of citizens in Ontario, that some are entitled to \$2.2 million a year and others are entitled to a maximum of \$930 a month. There isn't a parent in this province who has a disabled child who is not worried about what happens to them when they die. They know that, based on this government's treatment of them and based on the allowance they leave, their children are going to suffer when they pass on, and yet you have every obstacle and roadblock to prevent these parents from putting in place a lifestyle to permit their children to live. You should be ashamed of yourselves. Support this bill at the very least and please don't bury it in a committee.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would just like to recognize very quickly a couple of special guests, if I could: Calvin Hung, a grade 8 student; and Camille Logan, the vice-principal of Parkview Public School in Markham, who just presented a poster on racial harmony to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I stand proudly in support of the bill presented by my friend and colleague from Sault Ste Marie. I take little comfort, and I suspect that people with disabilities take little comfort, from the comments made by the member from Oxford and the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka.

The member from Oxford says that this bill would permit, not compel, the government, or presumably this assembly, to do what is before us. My point is, what's your point? If it's permissive, it's good. If it compels government to do it, it's even better. Whatever the government wants to have happen can happen on the basis of

what you want to have happen. I'm not quite clear on what you were saying by way of what this bill does or doesn't do.

Second, he says people with disabilities have the highest levels, presumably, of benefits. What does it mean when he says that when people with disabilities are here pleading with you, not as supplicants but as people who are saying with dignity, "We would like to have what is deserving for us as human beings"? What they're asking for is that we require an annual cost-of-living adjustment to income support payments as a way of recognizing real needs of real human beings. They don't want to have to come here as supplicants, pleading, entreating, soliciting you people to give them a little more. But that's what it appears they're coming to do each and every time.

You hear the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka saying, "We're doing so much. We would like to do more." But you can do more. It's just the choices that you make. The choice this government has made is to give people income tax cuts rather than giving people the real benefits they deserve. A third of the cuts they made, to education, have paid for those income tax cuts they have given to the highest-income earners of Ontario. The other third of the cuts they made, in health care, have benefited of course the high-income earners who have naturally benefited from those tax cuts. So you give a tax cut and someone has to pay for that tax cut. Who pays for that? Our educational system, our health care system and the people who work in them; and the other people who have lost incredibly are those who are most in need: the people who rely on government for support. People with disabilities are just one group. There are so many other groups. This is the other group that is coming before you, saying, "Look, the choices you are making are bad ones."

When you say we need to give income tax cuts to the corporate sector and to the highest-income earners of Ontario, what you're saying to people with disabilities is, "We don't have enough for you," because that's the choice you've made. Because you're sending billions and billions of dollars out every year, what you're saying to them is, "We don't have enough money left to give it to you." And then you come into this House and say, "We would like to give you more but we really can't. We don't have any money left." That's not the answer that people want from governments and that's the only answer you're giving them.

The other point the member for Oxford makes is that people with disabilities no longer are labelled unemployable. While that might be true, the fact of the matter is that people with disabilities still are discriminated against as a group because they can't have access to those jobs, and even if they have access to the jobs they don't get hired the way other people do. That is why the highest number of people who take their cases to the Ontario Human Rights Commission are people with disabilities. It's for a reason, and that reason is that discrimination exists in society on the basis of not creating workplaces that are accessible to them, and even if they were, they still are not getting the jobs they deserve.

It's sad to hear the member for Oxford and the other fellow from Parry Sound-Muskoka saying, "We would like to do more." They can do more and the choices are very clear. As New Democrats, since the very beginning when this government said, "We are going to institute income tax cuts," we said, "You are doing it on the backs of the most vulnerable individuals in society. You are doing it at the cost of a health care system suffering. You are doing it at a cost of our educational system suffering." That's the choice you've made. It's a very clear, ideological, Conservative choice you made and people are paying for that.

This bill is something that ought to be easy for the government to support. If you don't want to do it, if you don't want to support it, you bring in your own bill and label it differently. You can do it. You have the power to do it. But tell us that you want to do it, member for Oxford. Don't tell us, "This bill permits, does not compel." I don't know what you're saying. I don't know whether you're saying you would like it to compel you to do it and I don't know whether you're saying it's permitting you to do it but you don't want to do it. Whatever it is, speak clearly about what your position is.

Don't tell us they're receiving the highest level of benefits ever in the country. Don't tell them that, because otherwise they would not be here. If it was enough and if they were the highest level of income earners on the basis of what they receive, they wouldn't be here. They're here because they are in need. But they shouldn't be here pleading with you to give them a little extra.

So I hope the two members who have spoken with speeches that were clearly already prepared—I am hopeful that some of the members will stand on their own in support of this bill, take it to committee and support it, because that's the right thing to do.

1140

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton): I rise today to speak about private member's Bill 118, a bill introduced by the member for Sault Ste Marie.

On Tuesday, the member for Niagara Centre got up to defend this bill by saying that it did nothing: "This does not, in and of itself, necessarily entail an increased expenditure." He also said that the bill may provide—I emphasize the word "may," and I've read the bill—"permissive but not mandatory—that the amount of income support provided be adjusted on April 1." From what I have read in the newspapers, from the rhetoric across the way and from the NDP news release, when this bill was first introduced, I think the member was probably quite surprised to learn the bill that he has said would provide annual cost-of-living adjustments to payments under the Ontario disability support program will actually not do that at all.

Interjections.

Mr Tascona: Read the bill; that's exactly what it says. Actually, if I was one of the individuals who supported this bill or believed what the member said, I would be extremely disappointed with him and the NDP. Clearly, the NDP House leader realized the bill did nothing, yet

the NDP has been misleading Ontarians who rely on ODSP for months.

First of all, I'm wondering why we are wasting valuable time on a nothing bill, when we could be debating a bill of substance.

I cannot support a bill that does nothing. That's basically what it does: nothing. That being said—

Interjections.

Mr Tascona: I have a right to speak, regardless of the rhetoric across the way, because that's what it is. Read the bill, understand the bill and know what you're talking about.

That being said, I agree we must always work to do more for Ontarians with disabilities. I've heard from my constituents about this. It's something we should be working on. We should be doing something of substance. I think every member here would agree with that, despite the rhetoric across the way.

So we're debating a bill here today that, in fact, the other side says does nothing. We need more than that.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a brief contribution to make because there are so many members who would like to speak.

I have to disagree with one of the members who has already spoken. I'm not proud to be here discussing this bill. I'm not proud of the level of debate in this forum. I'm not proud of the fact that we, who have full-time jobs—our only job is to determine the needs of the people of Ontario—have not discharged that somewhere else by now.

I want to give credit to the member for Sault Ste Marie, because he has all the credibility in the world to bring forward this debate. For anyone to undermine that, I think, is beneath the members of this House, because an honest effort has been put forward. But it should be unnecessary. It should be unnecessary for anyone to not appreciate that there are people who, through no fault of their own, have gone through some rigorous and sometimes humiliating measures of how much in need they are—22 pieces of documentation to say they're people in need.

I refute the premise of the people on the opposite side of this House that says we get to decide what kind of quality of life they have. People make their own quality of life. What we have control over here are the intentions of the rest of the province, and we're not doing a good job. The province wants us to extend some dignity to people. They don't want us to sit here in judgment about the price of what they get to do with their lives or what they have to live on; they want us to interpret dignity for everyone in this province. For the member opposite to try to use some kind of trick to say he doesn't have to address that question—every member in this debate has to answer the question, "What should the finance minister do on Monday?" Which should she include? Who should be part of that budget? I tell you, the new Minister of Finance will go through the character test that sits and weighs heavily on everyone in this House. The revenues of this province are up by \$15 billion since the last time

we increased the pittance we give to the most vulnerable people in this province.

For anyone in this House not to then agree that when rents in Ontario, in every community, are 40% to 50% higher than rents elsewhere in the country for comparable communities, that we need to recognize that somehow in the stipend we give to people who through no fault of their own cannot provide for themselves—they provide for most of their own dignity; they provide for most of their own lives. They make and they've made a contribution to this province. It is beneath us in this Legislature to not accord that some usual form of debate.

I want to give credit to the member for Sault Ste Marie because he is doing a necessary thing, but it is not a credit to us that we couldn't have decided this by now and every year from here on.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I've been here too long to be astonished, but today I also find myself disgusted with government members, government back-benchers, in the face of the reality of the impoverishment of Ontarians with disability being forced into homelessness and being forced into levels of despair that they have never experienced in this province before.

I say to my sisters and brothers who are Ontarians with disability here in this chamber and across this province, as do all New Democrats, that this government has a track record that is, oh, so clear: the repeal of employment equity legislation which provided some modest access for persons with disabilities into the real economy and into the workplaces of this province—this government repealed that law as one of its first items of governmental agenda; this government's disdain for Ontarians with disabilities, where it would force Ontarians with disabilities into ongoing levels of impoverished lifestyles, treat them with disdain, disregard, and quite frankly afford them no dignity whatsoever.

Well, let me tell you something: Ontarians with disability is a far stronger community than you take them for. They have political clout. They have skill, talent, organizational abilities. They are out there on the ground as a grassroots movement. You will not make Ontarians with disability invisible by your attack on them and their agenda. They will pursue their rightful place in our society in Ontario, in terms of access and in terms of the economy and in terms of the right to live decently and with dignity. Your feckless efforts today to defeat this bill are shameful and disgusting, and Ontarians with disability will defeat you.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I'm glad to make some remarks this morning regarding the bill dealing with the indexation of ODSP amounts. Let me start by stating that we'll try and add a little light, a little more philosophical enlightenment to this debate, because we need to look at it in a broader context.

In the past year, we've passed the Ontarians with Disabilities Act—

Interjections.

Mr Hastings: If it's such a joke as the members opposite state, then my point would be, where were you

and why didn't you do it in the Peterson years? Where was the NDP when they were here from 1990 to 1995? Let me tell you, Speaker, that the folks who are advocating for the disabled today as if nobody else can do it and only they have a monopoly on it—guess what? It was those folks in the Rae government in 1993 who cut the pension level for the disabled.

Interjections.

1150

Mr Hastings: It's a fact. Go back and look at that historical reality. And yet they come here and claim and profess that only they have an advancement and monopoly on what can help the disabled.

On this side we take more market-oriented, more open assistance programs, not only through the Human Rights Code enforcement but also through the disabilities act that was passed. What we need in this province is an accessibility advisory council with people from all walks of life to advise the minister on how we can help the disabled get jobs. Job support assistance is one of the key elements of helping the disabled, and I think what this bill implies, much as there is some admirable content in it, and I appreciate the member from the Soo for presenting it, is that the only way that you can help the disabled in this very narrow context is to increase the amount of money available to them. That is the only approach they take and that to me is not the most realistic way to approach this particular problem.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Stop the clock. We need to have order. The member has the floor and he alone has the right to speak.

Mr Hastings: Not only is there an approach to help in terms of job support skills and programs of the like, what we also have done is advance the cochlear implant program. What is missing from this bill—and we didn't hear one remark from the members opposite—is that they need to take a more optimistic long-term approach in terms of how new technology can assist and help the disabled. For example, in recent media reports we have seen how the blind who have been challenged and impaired by their incapacity to see are now being assisted in terms of artificial vision technology. In fact, I recently saw an actual demonstration of a blind Canadian farmer who can drive a car. What governments need to do in the future—and you think you'd hear it from members opposite—is to adjust their regulations to anticipate that change in technology, those kinds of positive changes that can help this particular group of people.

Furthermore, I'm proud to be part of a government that separated out, under the ODSP, the disabled who had been associated and lumped in by the previous governments in this province as all one group. That to me is a significant advancement.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): First of all I congratulate the member for Sault Ste Marie for bringing this bill forward. His credibility on this issue, his passion on this issue, is beyond question.

I'm absolutely astonished at the members across the floor and their reaction to this. This is an issue of basic human dignity. This is an issue where you should put your briefing notes away, the rhetoric that comes out of the Premier's office that you're forced to read here today. You should refuse to stand up and read that rhetoric that is demeaning to Ontarians, your approach that leaves the most vulnerable people in this province often going begging, often having to use food banks, often being in substandard housing because of decisions you have made to treat those people in such conditions. It is disgraceful in a province that has had seven years of unprecedented economic growth, in a province where the government sees fit to give away \$2.5 billion a year in corporate tax cuts, that you can't find a decent adjustment to the standard of living for people who are disabled in Ontario.

We are judged as a society on how we treat the most vulnerable, how we treat people who need some help and support from government. We don't have to dictate to them how they live their lives. We don't dictate to them where they're supposed to live and what they're supposed to eat, but we have the basic responsibility to ensure that the most basic needs are provided for people, and this government's failed miserably. It is a disgrace the way this government's treated the disabled in Ontario. It is a disgrace as you abandon people who, through no fault of their own, are in very difficult situations. You pound your chest and you're proud of job creation and economic growth and tax cuts, but surely you cannot be proud of how we've treated people who are disabled in the province of Ontario. You had one slight chance today just to send out a signal that maybe, maybe you're intent on making it a little better, and what do we get? This garbage from across the floor from these members who sit there and don't understand the basic needs of people in this province who are disabled. Shame on you.

I hope some members have the guts and the courage to vote today with their hearts and with some compassion and understanding and dignity and respect, and stand up for what is right. Support this bill and send out a signal that in this province we do care about people who are disabled and we do believe there should be a better standard of living and more support for them.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I want to commend my colleague from Sault Ste Marie. As the former critic for people with disabilities, I had an opportunity to tour this province. I can tell you that from Windsor to Thunder Bay to Ottawa to Kingston to here in Toronto, this is an issue that's affecting people across this province. I wish this government would open its ears and take off the blinders and do what is needed for the most vulnerable in this province.

I think we need to have further debates in this Legislature on issues faced by persons with disabilities. One thing I'd like to take this short period of time to talk about is something that is of extreme importance to persons with disabilities who are living in institutions, in group homes or in a lodging home, and that's the personal needs allowance.

The personal needs allowance in this province is provided to an individual for things they have to purchase like toiletries, clothes and basic needs those individuals have. Yet just as this government has abandoned persons with disabilities on ODSP, it has also abandoned those individuals—the most vulnerable and most needy in our society—with no increase in the personal needs allowance in over 10 years. The \$112 a month that those individuals in institutions receive is not meeting their needs.

We have turned our backs on these individuals. Those of you with a psychiatric hospital in your riding, take the opportunity, as I've done at the St Thomas site, to go in and talk to those individuals, those residents, and find out what it's like to live on \$112 a month. We're turning our backs on them.

If you on the other side of the House have any social conscience, why don't you stand up and support this bill that's in front of us today? Better yet, support a thorough review of how we support the most vulnerable in this province. We can't turn our backs on them. These are individuals. We live in a country where everybody is to be treated equally, but you're creating two classes of citizens in this province. Something needs to change, and it's this government that needs to change.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Sault Ste Marie has two minutes to reply.

Mr Martin: We've had a lively debate here this morning on a subject that goes to the heart of what it means to be a modern civil society. The subject we debate on the floor of this House this morning is indeed, as the member from Hamilton West has said, an issue of basic human rights, an issue of basic human dignity.

I appreciate the contributions that everybody who has participated has made—the members for Oxford, Thunder Bay-Superior North, Timmins-James Bay, Parry Sound-Muskoka, Prince Edward-Hastings, Parkdale-High Park, Niagara Centre, Etobicoke North, Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, Hamilton East and Elgin-Middlesex-London—a nice variety of voices from around this province calling on the government to do the right thing.

I tried, as I prepared for this morning, to come up with how the government would frame its opposition to this very basic request to support those in our communities who are in greatest need. Government has no greater a responsibility—and when I say "government" I mean all of us here, each member elected by their constituency, speaking on behalf of the people they represent—than to look after those in their jurisdiction who are most in need, who are most vulnerable, who are most marginalized.

You have an opportunity here this morning in this private members' hour—speaking particularly to you on the government side—not to stick with the script and the government edict on this, to act independently, to think for yourselves, to speak from your hearts to all those people, your constituents and mine, who are living with disabilities in this province, living in poverty, and to do the right thing. This bill may, as you say, not go the

distance and may not be enough. But it sends a signal. Do the right thing: vote for this.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for debate on ballot item number 50.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ON SCHOOL BUSES ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002

SUR LA PROTECTION DES ENFANTS DANS LES AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 49.

Mr Hoy has moved second reading of Bill 112, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): Mr Speaker, I request that Bill 112 be referred to the standing committee on justice and social policy.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Hoy has asked that the bill be referred to the standing committee on justice and social policy. Agreed? Agreed.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM AMENDMENT ACT (FAIRNESS IN DISABILITY INCOME SUPPORT PAYMENTS), 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE PROGRAMME ONTARIEN DE SOUTIEN AUX PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES (ÉQUITÉ DANS LES VERSEMENTS DU SOUTIEN DU REVENU)

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 50.

Mr Martin has moved second reading of Bill 118, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 to require annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support payments.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1202 to 1207.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please stand and remain standing until their name is called.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Norm
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	O'Toole, John
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Parsons, Ernie
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Peters, Steve
Charley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Prue, Michael
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Pupatello, Sandra
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Ruprecht, Tony

Di Cocco, Caroline
Dombrowsky, Leona

Martel, Shelley
Martin, Tony

Smitherman, George
Tascona, Joe

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please stand and remain standing until their name is called.

Nays

Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Emie	Mushinski, Marilyn
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Jackson, Cameron	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Johns, Helen	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Johnson, Bert	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Kells, Morley	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Klees, Frank	Tumbull, David
Faherty, Jim	Maves, Bart	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Mazzilli, Frank	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	McDonald, AL	Young, David
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 30; the nays are 38.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It being past 12 of the clock, all business before the House is now complete. The House will resume sitting at 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1210 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WATER QUALITY

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Today, Ontarians woke up to learn that the Ernie Eves government has not yet learned anything from the tragedy of Walkerton as they continue to fail to monitor our drinking water properly. Drinking water for more than a million and a half Ontarians in southwestern Ontario has to be retested today because the Eves government was not properly monitoring our water. Hundreds and thousands of Ontario families don't even know if they've been drinking contaminated water for several weeks. How could the Ernie Eves government let this happen after the deaths at Walkerton? How could this happen after the recommendations of Justice O'Connor?

The phones in my constituency office have been ringing off the wall today. People are concerned about what's happened, and people are concerned that they've been once again abandoned by the Ernie Eves government. Families are worried that this government has put their children at risk.

We know the NDP government started this privatization path of water testing labs. Then, in 1996, the Conservatives accelerated the move at breakneck speed. Six years ago, then-Finance Minister Ernie Eves, and now our Premier, slashed the Ministry of the Environment budget by more than half and cut staff by over a third. Ernie Eves still continues to put the drinking water of our

families at risk despite what happened at Walkerton. Ladies and gentlemen of Ontario, we all know that this government is failing the families of this province.

BIG SISTERS OF YORK REGION

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I rise today to speak about an agency in my riding of York North, Big Sisters of York Region. For the past few months, Big Sisters has been working on developing a partnership with Girls Inc. Girls Inc is an American-based, non-profit organization whose motto is "Inspiring All Girls to be Strong, Smart and Bold." This organization provides gender-specific programming and research based on informal education programs aimed at meeting the physical, intellectual and emotional needs of young girls between the ages of six and 18. These programs are offered to millions of young girls, primarily in underserviced or high-risk areas.

As a result of the partnership, Big Sisters will be able to offer programming in such areas as math and science education, pregnancy and drug abuse prevention, adolescent health, violence prevention and literacy.

Big Sisters has been providing programming for girls and young women in York region since 1979. This precedent-setting initiative has received positive feedback from funding partners and has been applauded by members of the community. I offer my congratulations to the Big Sisters of York Region on their initiative.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): This morning, the students of C.C. McLean Public School attended here at the Legislature. This morning, their families back in Gore Bay woke up to the news that their water system was at risk. The Tory government has been asleep at the wheel and the health care of families in my riding has been put at risk.

The question people are asking today is, how could the Ernie Eves government let this happen? After seven deaths in Walkerton, after a judicial inquiry, how could the Minister of the Environment and the Premier allow for this to happen again? Have they learned nothing from Walkerton?

Do you know what's worse? Just like in Walkerton it wasn't the government that identified the problem. It was an anonymous tip that led to the discovery that our water was not being properly tested. What if the tip hadn't come? How much longer would the residents of Gore Bay be put at risk under this government?

What started this mess? It started when Ernie Eves gutted the Ministry of the Environment. It started when Ernie Eves cut monitoring stations, fired inspectors and shut down public laboratories.

On behalf of the families in Gore Bay that the Ernie Eves government has put at risk, I demand an explanation. How could this government let this happen?

SENIORS' MONTH

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): In keeping with the celebration of June as Seniors' Month, it's my pleasure to pay tribute to three successful seniors in my riding of Durham. There are literally hundreds of seniors I could mention, but the three I chose to mention are leaders in their respective roles in their communities.

For instance, Greta Brown, who has just turned 90, has been a volunteer since 1956 and was recently honoured with a birthday celebration at Trinity United Church in Bowmanville. Ms Brown spends several hours at our hospital gift shop in Bowmanville on Thursdays and Sundays handling cash, recording sales and arranging displays. She also volunteers for Community Care on Fridays. She bowls and belongs to various community groups. A truly beautiful lady.

Roy Forrester was recently nominated as Clarington's senior citizen of the year. Mr Forrester is another example of a successful older adult serving his community. He is currently chair of the Oak Ridges Trail Association and is a member of the Clarington Concert Band. He has served as chair of the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and is an avid naturalist and birder. Before his retirement, he was the owner of the quite supportive Orono Weekly Times community newspaper. A true statesman.

In the township of Scugog, the Senior of the Year nominee is Carol Morrow. She is one of the township's most dedicated community care volunteers. Carol is active in Meals on Wheels and is a volunteer driver. She also finds time to play the piano for community care luncheons as well as playing the organ at many of the church celebrations.

In keeping with the recognition of Seniors' Month, I'd also like to pay respect to the visiting former parliamentarians—not to be confused with senior citizens, but I'd like to recognize them as well.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Today in Essex county, as across Ontario, people in this province woke up to the news that this government failed yet again to protect their health and safety and their water system.

We need to be reminded by this today that it was Ernie Eves, as Finance Minister, who was responsible for cutting the Ministry of the Environment's budget in half, who was responsible for firing inspectors, who was responsible at the outset for the tragedy in Walkerton and the seven deaths there. One need only review the commissioner's report with respect to that. Why is it that this government hasn't put the health and safety of all our citizens first? They have failed yet again.

I say to the Premier and the Minister of the Environment, take responsibility for this. Don't run away from the House, and certainly don't run away from an emergency debate this afternoon on this vital issue, an issue that's being debated in every coffee shop and doughnut

shop in this province. Don't prevent this Legislature from having the opportunity to debate the facts of the situation: the fact of when the government knew, what it knew, and how long it took to respond. Don't prevent this Legislature and the duly elected people of this province from discussing the most pressing and important issue that has faced us certainly in the seven years I've been here.

This crisis merits a debate in the House this afternoon. I call on the government and the minister responsible not to hide, but to come forward and have a full debate, and not to put any conditions on that debate, so that all of us in this House have the opportunity to express our concerns and the concerns of our constituents.

MENINGITIS C

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Today I will introduce the Michael Maxwell bill, a bill to establish a province-wide immunization program against meningitis C.

On March 14, Michael Maxwell developed flu-like symptoms, was admitted to hospital that night and 21 hours later died of meningitis C. He was 17 years old.

This tragedy reinforces the need for this government to follow the lead of Quebec and Alberta and establish a province-wide immunization program for the highest-risk group: infants from two months to young adults aged 20. It's not acceptable for the Minister of Health to insist on federal government support to do so. Ontario runs the flu shot campaign without federal money. Ontario should follow the lead of two other provinces which have recognized meningitis as a serious public health issue which must be addressed.

The vaccine to protect against meningitis C normally costs over \$100 and is not usually covered under private insurance plans. That cost is prohibitive for many Ontario families, if they even are aware that a vaccine exists. It's imperative that the Ontario government cover the costs.

Further, the province must undertake a major public education campaign about the serious, even fatal, consequences of meningitis and the need for us to protect Ontario infants and young people.

Gregg and Bernadette Maxwell are here today for the introduction of the bill in their son's name. I call on the government to adopt this private member's bill as soon as possible so that the tragedy which so profoundly affected the Maxwell family never happens again in Ontario.

1340

SOUTH ASIAN WELCOME CENTRE

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): On behalf of the people of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, I'm pleased to recognize the opening of the South Asian Welcome Centre. About 50,000 new Canadians arrive each year from South Asian countries and 80% of them choose to settle here in the greater Toronto area. That means there are at least 40,000 new South Asian Canadians in this region every year. They are hard-

working, entrepreneurial and self-reliant, but they need community support as well. I'm pleased the South Asian Welcome Centre will help new immigrants learn English and will help in their job search, as well as a variety of family and social services supports.

Last Sunday, June 9, I was very pleased to be able to join in the opening celebrations of the centre on Strathearn Avenue in my riding. The centre is inspired by the Reverend Bill Virgin, who saw that new immigrants in Brampton and Mississauga need help to adjust to the ways we do things here in Canada.

We should also recognize that the office space for the centre was contributed by Mr Gurdish Mangat. As well, there has been great support from the Baptist churches of Ontario and Quebec.

Congratulations and best wishes to them.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I rise in the House today to express my deep concern that the people in my community of Brant awoke to news that their water may not be safe. Water testing in Ontario is in disarray and this government is failing to properly watch to ensure that our water is safe.

In my riding of Brant, both municipalities—the city of Brantford and the county of Brant—were using MDS Laboratories in London to test their water. They had been assured by the Ministry of the Environment that MDS labs tested the water within provincial standards and regulations, yet the news being released by the ministry yesterday urged 67 municipalities to test their water again after discovering that MDS Laboratories was not testing within the standards.

I have spoken to our medical officer of health in Brant and have been assured that they were doing parallel tests along with the city to ensure the safety of the drinking water for the citizens of Brant. For that, I compliment them. Both mayors have expressed concerns about the government's handling of issues surrounding safe drinking water today and in the past.

My concern is not only for the citizens of the riding of Brant, but for the 1.6 million Ontarians living within the 67 affected communities that may have been exposed to E. coli. This government has learned nothing from the tragedy of Walkerton and continues to mismanage our testing.

Obviously this government cannot stand in the House today and assure the public, because of the mismanagement they're going through. They are not monitoring it properly and haven't invested in the human power and the resources necessary to test that water.

ST MICHAEL'S MUSTANGS

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): The Niagara Falls St. Michael High School boys' soccer team, the Mustangs, sure have a lot to be proud of. They recently beat Hamilton 2-1 in the Southern Ontario Secondary

Schools Association championship, giving them their first title since the 1998 season.

Team stars included Mike Elia, who scored a pair of goals against John A. MacDonald of Hamilton. Elia scored the game's first goal in the first half. Hamilton tied the score in the second half and Elia then scored again for the win.

The Mustangs advanced to the OFSAA championships that took place last weekend in Ottawa. Despite their winning streak during the regular season and in tournament games, the Mustangs lost in the semi-finals at OFSA.

The Mustangs had an exceptional team this year and they should be thrilled with their accomplishments. I'd like to congratulate the St Michael's boys' soccer team on their great effort to win SOSSA and for their efforts in the OFSA championships. The Mustangs have consistently proven they are a skilled team who are sure to be successful again next year. They've done their school and Niagara Falls proud. Congratulations, St Mike's.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Speaker: Today I laid on the table a resolution which reads, "Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario declares unequivocally that the Ernie Eves government should initiate negotiations with Inco Ltd to provide and ensure the following condition:

"That Inco Ltd be bound by an agreement ensuring ore mined in the Sudbury area be processed within the city of greater Sudbury and that the same protections provided to Newfoundland be provided to Ontario."

I would ask for unanimous consent to debate this on Monday.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm rising to request leave to make a motion for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of an emergency debate on a matter relating to a genuine emergency which was precipitated by the government's failure to ensure proper water testing and reporting by private laboratories, thereby endangering the lives of thousands of Ontarians.

The Speaker: Were you asking for unanimous consent?

Ms Churley: Yes, I am.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Earlier today at House leaders, the official opposition asked the government for an emergency debate on the situation that arose yesterday with respect to water. The government has yet to formally respond to us with respect to the need for an emergency debate.

I would seek unanimous consent to allow the minister an opportunity to address the House now to indicate whether or not the government is prepared to have an emergency debate with respect to water safety. It was our understanding that the government was interested in

doing that. I would like to find out now whether or not we will be debating that this afternoon.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I have a Canadian Press story which quotes, as of this morning, the Minister of the Environment stating, "Let's just maintain our composure; have this emergency debate; go through question period so the information can become public."

I seek your direction, sir. The Minister of the Environment appears to have announced publicly that there will be an emergency debate. Will that occur before or after orders of the day?

The Speaker: I have no knowledge of any debate, emergency or otherwise. As you know, we asked for unanimous consent and there was not.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, I am very pleased to welcome in the Speaker's gallery today a number of our former colleagues. We also have some special guests, two former Speakers, John Turner and Hugh Edighoffer, joining us. Please join me in welcoming the entire membership of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Speaker: I remember Speaker Edighoffer well.

The Speaker: All former Speakers are going to remember the member for Niagara Centre, I'm sure—fondly, I might add.

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We have a very special guest in the gallery today. Her name is Amanda Minderlein and she's a Widdifield high school student. She's been down here at Sick Kids for far too long. She has a tough battle with cancer and we just want to wish her well.

Mr Kormos: On a point of order, Speaker: Students from Grapeview public school from the ridings of St Catharines and Niagara Centre.

The Speaker: We welcome our friends.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to the fact that the former member for Mississauga South, who served in this House for 18 years, Mr Doug Kennedy, is in the public gallery. He looks younger now than when I came here 18 years ago. It's wonderful to see him.

I do believe it's unfortunate that we didn't have television in the era of Speakers Turner and Edighoffer, because I would love for all of us to see the decorum in the House when they were Speakers, and members on both sides of the House behaved.

The Speaker: There are some days I wish they were back here myself.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You know, it's not often you get this

many people here who have represented the ridings across this province. I think we should introduce every one of them.

The Speaker: Unfortunately, we also have a lot of deferred votes.

1350

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
AMENDMENT ACT (ACCESS TO CHILD
ABUSE REGISTER), 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE
ET À LA FAMILLE

(ACCÈS AU REGISTRE DES MAUVAIS
TRAITEMENTS INFILGÉS AUX ENFANTS)

Mr Parsons moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 92, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to allow school boards and police services access to the child abuse register / Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille pour donner aux conseils scolaires et aux services policiers accès au registre des mauvais traitements infligés aux enfants.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): The provincial government maintains a register with children's aid societies on which they are able to place names of individuals who have been convicted or who they believe have assaulted a child. There are instances where individuals may not have been convicted in court because of the victim being unable or unwilling to testify, for example; nevertheless, the name is registered. Unfortunately, at this moment only children's aid societies have access to the list.

This bill would permit school boards, when checking references for staff or volunteers, and police services to have access to this child abuse registry. I believe it is vital that we have every piece of information available to protect our children, and this bill would open it up to other authorities that require that information.

MICHAEL MAXWELL ACT (HEALTH
INSURANCE ACT AMENDMENTS), 2002

LOI MICHAEL MAXWELL DE 2002
MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'ASSURANCE-SANTÉ

Ms Martel moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act, in memory of Michael Maxwell, to amend the Health Insurance Act to provide for immunization against meningitis C / Projet de loi 107, Loi à la mémoire de Michael Maxwell modifiant la Loi sur

l'assurance-santé afin de prévoir une immunisation contre la méningite C.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): The purpose of the bill is to convince the Ontario government to adopt a province-wide immunization program against meningitis C. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization has accepted and endorsed a vaccine which is safe for use even with infants aged two months. Both Quebec and Alberta have begun province-wide programs to protect infants and adolescents because they recognize that meningitis C is a serious public health issue which must be addressed.

It's time for Ontario to follow this lead by adopting a province-wide meningitis immunization program so that the tragedy which affected the Maxwell family can never happen with another Ontario family.

DEFERRED VOTES

RELIABLE ENERGY AND CONSUMER
PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA FIABILITÉ
DE L'ÉNERGIE ET LA PROTECTION
DES CONSOMMATEURS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant certaines lois en ce qui concerne le secteur de l'énergie.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1354 to 1359.

The Speaker: Mr Stockwell has moved second reading of Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes
Amott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Beaubien, Marcel
Clark, Brad
Cunningham, Dianne
DeFaria, Carl
Dunlop, Garfield
Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Gill, Raminder
Hardeman, Ernie
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Johnson, Cameron
Johnson, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Klees, Frank
Marland, Margaret
Martiniuk, Gerry
Maves, Bart
Mazzilli, Frank
McDonald, AL
Miller, Norm
Molinari, Tina R.
Munro, Julia
Mushinski, Marilyn
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Runciman, Robert W.
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tsubouchi, David H.
Tumbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 44; the nays are 29.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 10, 2002, this bill is ordered referred to the standing committee on general government.

STUDENT PROTECTION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002

SUR LA PROTECTION DES ÉLÈVES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 101, An Act to protect students from sexual abuse and to otherwise provide for the protection of students / Projet de loi 101, Loi visant à protéger les élèves contre les mauvais traitements d'ordre sexuel et à prévoir autrement leur protection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1402 to 1407.

The Speaker: Mrs Witmer has moved third reading of Bill 101, An Act to protect students from sexual abuse and to otherwise provide for the protection of students.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Gilchrist, Steve	Mushinski, Marilyn
Arnott, Ted	Gill, Raminder	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Gravelle, Michael	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hastings, John	Parsons, Ernie
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Peters, Steve
Bisson, Gilles	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Boyer, Claudette	Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael
Bradley, James J.	Jackson, Cameron	Pupatello, Sandra
Brown, Michael A.	Johns, Helen	Runciman, Robert W.
Caplan, David	Johnson, Bert	Ruprecht, Tony
Chudleigh, Ted	Kennedy, Gerard	Smitherman, George
Churley, Marilyn	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Kormos, Peter	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Stewart, R. Gary
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	Martinik, Gerry	Ecker, Janet
Di Cocco, Caroline	Maves, Bart	Elliott, Brenda
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mazzilli, Frank	Galt, Doug
Duncan, Dwight	Tascona, Joseph N.	Gilchrist, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield	Tsubouchi, David H.	Gill, Raminder
Ecker, Janet	Turnbull, David	Hardeman, Ernie
Elliott, Brenda	Wetlaufer, Wayne	Hastings, John
Galt, Doug	Wilson, Jim	
	Witmer, Elizabeth	
	Wood, Bob	
	Young, David	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 76; the nays are 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

BUILDING CODE STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2002LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LE CODE DU BÂTIMENT

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement / Projet de loi 124, Loi visant à améliorer la sécurité publique et à accroître l'efficacité dans l'exécution du code du bâtiment.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1410 to 1415.

The Speaker: Mr Hodgson has moved second reading of Bill 124, An Act to to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Bert	Sterling, Norman W.
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, AL	Wetlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Hastings, John	Newman, Dan	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 47; the nays are 29.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 11, 2002, this bill is ordered for third reading.

HERITAGE HUNTING AND FISHING ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA CHASSE ET LA PÊCHE PATRIMONIALES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 135, An Act to recognize Ontario's recreational hunting and fishing heritage and to establish the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission / Projet de loi 135, Loi visant à reconnaître le patrimoine de la chasse et de la pêche sportives en Ontario et à créer la Commission du patrimoine chasse et pêche.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1419 to 1424.

The Speaker: Mr Ouellette has moved second reading of Bill 135, An Act to recognize Ontario's recreational hunting and fishing heritage and to establish the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic
Arnett, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bartolucci, Rick
Beaubien, Marcel
Bisson, Gilles
Boyer, Claudette
Brown, Michael A.
Caplan, David
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Brad
Crozier, Bruce
Cunningham, Dianne
Curling, Alvin
DeFaria, Carl
Di Cocco, Caroline
Dombrowsky, Leona
Duncan, Dwight
Dunlop, Garfield
Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve

Gill, Raminder
Gravelle, Michael
Hardeman, Ernie
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Hoy, Pat
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Klees, Frank
Kormos, Peter
Kwinter, Monte
Marland, Margaret
Martel, Shelley
Martinuk, Gerry
Maves, Bart
Mazzilli, Frank
McDonald, AL
McGuinty, Dalton
Miller, Norm
Molinari, Tina R.
Munro, Julia
Mushinski, Marilyn

Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Parsons, Ernie
Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry
Prue, Michael
Pupatello, Sandra
Runciman, Robert W.
Ruprecht, Tony
Smitherman, George
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

Nays

Churley, Marilyn

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 71; the nays are 1.

Interruption.

The Speaker: Order. Would the Sergeant-at-Arms please ask our guest to leave.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 5, 2002, this bill is ordered for third reading.

VISITORS

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food):

On a point of order, Speaker: A couple of days ago, the member for Niagara Centre said that family really makes us able to be at Queen's Park today. So I want to introduce to all my colleagues my son, Brent Johns, who is up in the stands—stand up and wave, Brent—and his classmates.

The interesting thing for the Liberals is that this class, as you can imagine, is pretty political, because Amber Overholt, the granddaughter of Jack Riddell, is in this class too. Stand up, Amber.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Speaker: Considering this great opportunity, I think they should introduce everyone in the class.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I understand he's a pretty good hockey player too.

ORAL QUESTIONS

WATER QUALITY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My questions today are for the Minister of the Environment. Thousands of Ontario families woke up this morning to the kind of news they had hoped in their heart of hearts would be long put behind them. They hoped that two years after the Walkerton tragedy, two years after seven people lost their lives, two years after 2,300 people became very ill, they wouldn't learn once again that they can't trust Ontario water.

Minister, can you tell those families today, here and now, how it could be, two years after Walkerton, two years after seven people died, two years after 2,300 got sick, that this kind of thing could possibly happen again?

1430

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I appreciate the question from the leader of the official opposition. Let's be clear: the situation, as I was advised, was dealt with very quickly. Dr D'Cunha, the MOH for the province, has done his job and outlined all the procedures that were put in place.

I think we should keep this in perspective. I don't want to grossly downplay the situation, but I think we should keep in perspective, as Dr D'Cunha said, that the possibility is pretty close to zero that there was any E coli in the system for those tests he found. As a precautionary measure, he moved to alert the MOHs locally. There is a full investigation taking place with respect to the lab and

the Ministry of the Environment. As soon as I have that information, I'll certainly report back to the House.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, maybe the most frightening aspect of this was that here, as was the case in Walkerton, the way this information was brought to your attention was not by means of some rigorous, thorough and extensive investigation process or ongoing review of what's happening in our private labs. This was the result of an anonymous tip. This was the luck of the draw. Somebody tipped you off to the fact that there was something going on in a particular lab and the right kinds of tests were not being done.

You're not staying on top of this. The reason you're not staying on top of this is because your ministry doesn't have the resources. That's a result of the cuts made by your government to the Ministry of the Environment. You have about one half the budget you used to have. You have one third fewer staff than you used to have. You don't have the resources to get the job done.

Are we going to have to continue to rely on anonymous tipsters to find out whether or not something is wrong with Ontario water?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Let's be very clear: this has nothing to do with resources. Never in the history of this province has the Ministry of the Environment inspected laboratories.

The recommendation that came out of the O'Connor report two on May 23 was that we should start inspecting laboratories. You heard my Premier and the Premier of the province of Ontario say that we will accept all recommendations from the O'Connor second report. So we have adopted that approach. We can't flick a switch and, in fact, do it the next day. It takes time.

But this didn't have anything to do with resources whatsoever. Never have we done this. It had nothing to do with the number of people employed, the budget; not at any stretch in this process did it have to do with that. So let's be clear that there may be questions that should be answered and an investigation should take place, but nowhere has anyone suggested to me at any time at the Ministry of the Environment or elsewhere that it had anything to do with resources.

Mr McGuinty: This had much, if not everything, to do with resources. Why is it that this matter was not found out as a result of some kind of a spot check or spot audit on this lab? We had to rely on anonymous tipsters. Why is it you didn't find this out through your resources, Mr Minister? Why is it that was not the case? Why is it Ontario's families woke up this morning to this kind of news, the kind of news we had all hoped was long behind us, only to learn that you are still not doing your job?

How many other labs are you failing to inspect on a regular basis? How many more times are we going to have to rely on anonymous tipsters to get this kind of information before you're going to act? That's why you acted in the case of Walkerton. That's why you're acting now.

When are you going to put in place the necessary resources, the necessary numbers of inspectors and

enforcement officers, to do the job you are still failing to do two years after Walkerton?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I do understand the politics of this and the questions being asked. The question being asked is that somehow this is related to budget. I say to the members opposite, it isn't.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, it has nothing to do with it. In fact—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Sorry. Minister?

Hon Mr Stockwell: There has never been a—

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): He's blustering now.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I do take exception to that. This is a very important issue. I don't think it has anything to do with blustering or politics at all.

There has never been a government—

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): You said it was politics. You're the one who said that.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Mr Speaker, I appreciate the member for Scarborough-Agincourt's frustration. I'm trying to get to the response. There has never been a government that has in fact tested labs. We appreciate the fact that in O'Connor two—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: —and there has never been a government that—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Hon Mr Stockwell: O'Connor two suggested we should in fact get into the business of accrediting, licensing and auditing labs doing drinking water testing.

That report came out May 23. We can't flip a switch. We agreed to the recommendation of all 93. That was the product that was produced by the O'Connor report, we agreed, but at no time before this was there any inclination, any registration, any opposition suggesting that there should be an accreditation process to test labs.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, just so we understand what you're telling us: your government, the Ernie Eves government, proceeded to privatize all water testing labs in Ontario, and you waited until last month for Mr Justice Dennis O'Connor to tell you that you have a responsibility to police what's going on in our water testing labs, and you're also telling us that you have not yet begun to implement that recommendation, which common sense would have dictated you should have done from the outset. Is that what you are effectively telling us?

I'm going to ask you this, Minister: how many times did you send in somebody to this particular lab, which as I understand has been accredited since 1995—municipalities have been relying on your list of accredited agencies—how many times have you had inspectors in there making sure that they're doing their tests in the way they're supposed to? How many times?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The actual accreditation body for laboratories is the Standards Council of Canada. We have

informed them that this in fact has taken place. They actually accredit the labs, I say to the Leader of the Opposition. The auditor for this is the Canadian Association for Environmental Analytical Laboratories. They're the auditor. They go in to do that. The actual responsibility for accrediting the labs and auditing the labs are those two bodies.

With respect to privatization, it was the former NDP government in 1993 that began charging municipalities for the use of provincial labs to do drinking water testing. The NDP gave municipalities the choice of using provincial labs or private labs. By 1996, about half the municipalities were using private, non-government labs to do their drinking water testing.

I understand the politics of this, but if the allegation is that somehow we got this involved—it began in 1993. When the NDP government gave municipalities the option of using private labs or public labs and they started charging for public lab use and the private labs were less expensive, municipalities started using, in 1993, the private lab option.

Mr McGuinty: Again, Minister, it's very important that the facts be well known in this. It is true that the NDP took us down the privatization road, but at that point in time all municipalities had an option as to whether they went with the private sector or the public sector. You people came in; you decided there will be no more public sector testing of water for municipalities.

Mr Justice Dennis O'Connor is very, very clear in part two, and this should have been common sense in the best sense of the expression. He said the province "cannot rely on accreditation alone as a means of overseeing water testing laboratories." He goes on to say, "Inspections should be done ... and should include unannounced inspections."

You privatized water testing in Ontario back in 1995. For all intents and purposes, our municipalities have no other options; they've got to go private now. How many inspections have you done since 1995 in all those private sector labs? How many?

Hon Mr Stockwell: First and foremost, there are still public labs out there. Many municipalities operate their own public labs, so the allegation is unfounded. I appreciate the question; I will get to it. I am dealing with the preamble. The allegation is unfounded.

You quote from O'Connor's report, and I don't disagree with O'Connor's report.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I appreciate that the member wants an answer. I'm trying. You quote from O'Connor's report, part two, and we don't disagree with the report. I think we must put some context on this. The report came out on May 23. Today is June; it's early June. We haven't had an opportunity, although we've undertaken to implement all the recommendations. So even the member opposite—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. It's too noisy. Sorry to interrupt the minister.

Sorry, Minister.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The member opposite has to see the irony in his question. You're asking me how many labs we've tested because O'Connor told us to test. He only gave us the report on May 23. Even you must accept that you can't switch on a light and do that kind of work in progress.

1440

Mr McGuinty: These revelations from this minister are shocking. He's telling us that back in 1995 it was OK to privatize water testing, and this government backed away entirely from the responsibility it's supposed to carry out on behalf of Ontario families to make sure that whatever the heck they're doing in the private labs is for our good. You didn't do that. You cannot now claim, "Well, hang on a second, we just got the recommendation a couple of months ago and we have yet to act on it." That is irresponsible.

Your responsibility is to make sure that if you are going to divest yourself of the responsibility of testing water for our municipalities, if you're going to fob it off on the private sector, you have a responsibility to make sure you are, at a minimum, overseeing what is going on inside those labs.

I ask you again: since you've privatized water testing in Ontario, how many inspections have you conducted inside those private labs?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I understand that the Leader of the Opposition is trying to leave the impression that there haven't been any inspections of these labs by any body. The Standards Council of Canada is the accreditation body. They in fact accredit the labs. Second, the Canadian Association for Environmental Analytical Laboratories is the auditor. They in fact do that too.

I appreciate what you're trying to do. You're trying to leave the impression that somehow there isn't a check and balance here. In many situations in this government, there are checks and balances provided by associations just like this. They've always been put forward.

O'Connor came out two weeks ago and said, "Maybe you folks should be doing this on your own." All we said subsequent to O'Connor coming out is, "Yes, Justice O'Connor, we agree, and we're beginning the process of doing it."

I know the member wants to paint this a certain way, but it's profoundly unfair and not an acceptable response. I'm prepared to debate this, but at least get your information right before you start making accusations.

The Speaker: New question.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Minister of Environment. Once again your government has failed to ensure that the drinking water in this province is safe. Following Walkerton, this failure to ensure safe and reliable water and to properly test for deadly E coli is inexcusable, unacceptable.

You promised to fix the problems that caused Walkerton, but now we see that you haven't. You promised to restore public confidence in our water, but in fact you have done just the opposite.

Minister, I want to ask you, and please come clean with us today in this House: how long has your ministry known about the specific threat to water quality in this province? How long have you known and done nothing about it?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The best information I have is that the information was provided to the Ministry of Environment by another company in this industry on May 23. At that point in time, the ministry informed—what they classified as “sprang into action”—with respect to the inspection. I was informed, as I said, on Tuesday evening that there was a potential for a directive to be issued. It was confirmed to me on Wednesday morning.

So the best information I can give you—I think it's accurate—from the Ministry of Environment is that they had this information, basically the phone call, on May 23.

Ms Churley: Minister, when the government decided to appoint one minister for both energy and the environment, the NDP was quite worried and said so at the time. We feared that not having a full-time Minister of Environment would put the public at risk, and our fears have been proven true. You were so busy, and still are, trying to privatize one of our vital public assets, Hydro, that you let our most vital asset, our water, become unsafe. Minister, you have no time to deal with keeping our environment safe.

I'm going to ask you again. We have been told that your ministry was made aware of these problems with this lab for some time. I want to know why there was a delay in identifying for those 67 communities at risk that there was a potential problem with their water.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I presume you were equally concerned when the Premier of the province of Ontario, Mr Rae, also appointed one minister to run energy and environment. You were just as vocal at that time, I suppose.

I say to the member opposite, that's exactly what I said. I've been very straightforward on this issue. May 23 is the best information I have that the ministry was in fact informed. That's exactly what's going on with respect to the investigation, why it took so long between May 23 and June 5. That's the kind of information we're investigating right now.

Ms Churley: That's one of our concerns because, as you know, in Walkerton it has been proven that the delay in the reporting and then the notification to the community could have, if not prevented some deaths, prevented some of the illnesses. So this delay is inexcusable and we need to know what happened there so that it never happens again.

But Minister, you knew that privatization and deregulation of the testing labs was one reason why Walkerton happened, yet you have continued to underfund and undermine the very people and organizations that are supposed to be keeping our water safe. In the wake of Walkerton, you fiddled, you tweaked, but basically you did nothing to improve the situation. I'm asking you today, will you invest in the inspectors and scientists who are the front-line troops that protect Ontario's environ-

ment and keep our water safe? Will you bring back the staff you fired?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think you're on thin ice with respect to the private lab situation. As I outlined to the leader of the official opposition, it was your government in 1993 that began charging municipalities to use provincial labs and then, by charging them, you in fact drove them to the private labs that you didn't seem to have a problem with operating when you were in government. So the allegation that we somehow forced these municipalities to private labs is profoundly unfair.

With respect to the Walkerton issue, let's be clear: it was a public utility with public employees. I'm not suggesting that's any different, but it was a public utility with public employees. So the privatization argument there is somewhat moot with respect to public utilities and public employees who received the test.

I say to the member opposite, I have not heard one word from the Ministry of the Environment or those involved in this who said this is a money issue. It isn't a money issue. It has nothing to do with money. We need to investigate and understand why it took so long between May 23 and June 5 to get this information, extract it, move on it and move up as high as the minister's office, which is causing me, without any doubt, some concern. To make these allegations, I think you're on very thin ice with respect to your track record and your history.

The Speaker: New question?

Ms Churley: Your former Premier Mike Harris went to Walkerton and tried to blame the NDP for what happened there. It didn't work then and it isn't going to work now. As you know, and if you read your files, the NDP allowed some municipalities to use private labs. What your government did was come in and, within eight weeks, closed down the four public labs and made every municipality across the province find a private lab without any rules around accreditation. That is what happened, and that is cited by Justice O'Connor as one of the problems that created the situation in Walkerton.

Minister, it has been two years since that tragedy in Walkerton. You brought in new regulations but no funding to enforce them. You promised to implement the recommendations of the Walkerton inquiry. Now I'm asking you this: will you promise to take responsibility for providing safe drinking water by immediately reopening the public water-testing labs across this province?

Hon Mr Stockwell: If the member opposite is suggesting that I'm trying to blame the NDP, I think you may be somewhat sensitive. That wasn't my allegation. All I was alleging with respect to the private labs was that you had a part to play in it. If you feel that's blame, then you've got your own conscience to answer to.

With respect to the reporting process and what we did, I couldn't have acted more quickly. I acted as quickly as I could. I was made aware of concerns regarding incomplete testing, but they weren't found Tuesday evening. Wednesday morning, when they were confirmed to me

by the ministry, I issued an order against MDS labs. At the same time, we notified known municipalities and other waterworks' owners who were using MDS and suggested they should do retesting as a precautionary measure. We also sent a letter of official complaint to the Standards Council of Canada and the Canadian Association for Environmental Analytical Laboratories. The investigation and enforcement branch launched a full investigation. Once their concerns around incomplete testing were clear to me, I immediately contacted the chief medical officer of health, taking the advice of the chief medical officer of health to ensure that proper steps were taken. He called the 37 local municipal officers of health and dealt with them on a local basis. I then took the time to inform my cabinet, and then I took the time to inform you and the critic for the Liberal Party. I couldn't have acted any quicker or with more non-partisan action at all.

1450

Ms Churley: Minister, the people of this province want to know that their water is being tested, monitored and kept safe by publicly accountable inspectors and labs. They want you to implement the Justice O'Connor recommendations immediately.

As you know, the NDP developed a Safe Drinking Water Act two years ago, which finally your Premier agreed to pass after Judge O'Connor recommended a Safe Drinking Water Act. But you don't have time, given the other issues you're dealing with almost 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to have it done and introduced in this session. Minister, let's face it: you don't have time to protect the environment or the water in this province. There is no Minister of the Environment at this time. We have lost confidence in you, in your ability to protect the water and the environment in this province, and I'm asking you to do the honourable thing and step aside so that your Premier can appoint a real Minister of the Environment who is actually going to protect our water and our health. Minister, will you do that?

Hon Mr Stockwell: You've lost confidence in me? I don't believe there was ever a time that you felt you had confidence in me as Minister of the Environment.

I would like your confidence. I would like the confidence of the members opposite to deal with issues straight, to be an honourable member and answer them directly. I would like that. But I also would like the respect and the confidence of these people on this side of the House. I think I have that.

The Speaker: New question, the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, you said in answer to the leader of the official opposition, the leader of the Liberal Party, that you are not doing any testing—in other words, you are not going out to check on these labs; the Ministry of the Environment, for which you are responsible, is not going out—and you said you just got the report of Justice O'Connor.

In February of this year—February 13, I think it was—there were charges laid against Fine Analysis Lab-

atories in Hamilton, which have been under investigation for I think almost a year. Minister, were you not aware at that time, when there were problems with this particular laboratory, that you had to do something about ensuring that the accreditation was appropriate, ensuring that they had the proper equipment, ensuring that they were following the proper procedures? And was it not incumbent upon you at that time to start sending Ministry of the Environment officials out on a surprise basis to do double sample testing and so on to ensure that these laboratories were doing their job as you had hoped?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I want to say to the member opposite, first and foremost, that I heard you on CFRB, I think it was, today. Although there are partisan differences, I think Dr D'Cunha has suggested that we maintain composure and realize that there is not 100% certainty, but it's virtually 100%, that the probability is pretty close to zero. I appreciate the responsible remarks that you made on CFRB outlining those issues as well to the people of Ontario.

Applause.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's one of the few times I think he didn't want applause.

At this point in time, with respect to the charges that are before the courts, before commenting on any judicial process, you know as a previous Minister of the Environment that it's very difficult for me to respond to any of those kinds of questions. After taking you into my confidence yesterday, I feel very certain that could be done again. I could certainly respond to the questions in a process that is not a public one.

Mr Bradley: Minister, I would not ask you specific questions about the Fine Analysis Laboratories Ltd case because it is before the courts and it would be inappropriate to deal with that case. I guess the point I'm making is that it didn't take Justice O'Connor's report; you already had an investigation that was going on for about a year before there were charges laid against this company. Surely the government of Ontario should have known at that time there were going to be problems with some of these laboratories and that without Justice O'Connor's recommendations, after that investigation took place, after the charges were laid, your ministry should have been sending people out to all these laboratories.

I can tell you that I have the year 2000 adverse water incidents report, and in many of these cases where there are problems with water, it was the MDS lab that was dealing with them.

My concern would be that you did not, as a minister, nor did your predecessor, send out anybody to all of these other labs to ensure they were doing their job appropriately, and as a result, Ontario's water is placed at a much greater risk than it would have been otherwise.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think there is a police investigation involved, and that's why it's difficult for me to comment on the case. I know the member knows that if there's a police investigation taking place, it is difficult.

Having said that, if I knew for a moment that any of this was taking place, you can rest assured I would have

moved with due dispatch. I would have acted immediately if I had had any prior knowledge that this was taking place at the labs. So I can only offer up my word that I did not know. The moment I found out, I acted as quickly as possible.

I appreciate the fact that you outlined the concern or the issue of the lab that you're speaking about earlier. All I can tell you is that it's under police investigation and it would be totally inappropriate of me to make any kind of comment in a public forum about that with the police investigation already being undertaken.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Attorney General. It relates to the recent wave of violence against women in the greater Toronto area and what is becoming a serious concern to many people who live in this city and in this province. One of my constituents is dealing today with the emotional and physical trauma of being held at gunpoint by three youths, reportedly ages 15, 16 and 17. Three of her friends who were involved in that same incident are dealing with this horrific experience today.

At issue now is how our justice system is going to deal with these young offenders. Rumour has it and the suggestion is that they will be subjected to juvenile court and waltz through the system with a mere slap on the wrist. On behalf of every law-abiding citizen in this province, I implore you to use every resource you have available in your office to ensure that these young offenders are tried as adults, in adult court, so that they come to know the full effect of the law and the consequences of breaking it, should they be found guilty. Let's not be accused of being light on crime, as we so often accuse our federal cousins of doing.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the honourable member for raising this issue. Let me start by saying that our thoughts are with the victims of these crimes. The member is quite right that when the crime ends, the trauma attached to it doesn't necessarily conclude. Indeed, we are talking about a situation where both physical and emotional trauma is likely to continue for some time.

I say to you, though, Mr Speaker, and I know you are aware of this fact, I am not in a position to comment on any pending case. I cannot do this in this Legislative Assembly and I will not.

I will tell you that the crown will consider the facts of this case. They will consider the law as it exists under the Young Offenders Act and the case law that has developed thereunder. Factors such as the seriousness of the crime and the age and maturity of the accused are all taken into consideration.

Mr Klees: Thank you, Minister. I do trust that as you review this case, you will agree with, I believe, the vast majority of Ontarians, that you will have reason and full justification to ensure that this trial takes place in the

appropriate court to ensure that the message is very strong that this government does not condone this type of activity. I can tell you that people in my community are becoming more and more concerned about youth crime, whether that be swarming, activities such as these, or bullying in the schoolyard or in our communities.

Minister, I want to ask you, do you share the concern of my constituents and, I believe, of most if not all members in this House, that we need to send a message to law-abiding citizens of Ontario that we will not stand by and allow the quality of life in this province to be undermined by thugs in our communities? What will you do as Attorney General to ensure that we enforce the law, that the message is very clear that we will not condone this type of criminal activity?

1500

Hon Mr Young: I do indeed share the member's concern about youth crime in this country. In fact, 72% of Canadians, according to a recent Ipsos-Reid poll, have indicated that they have little or no confidence in the Young Offenders Act. I suspect the federal government considered that when they brought forward their new legislation and started a process that included a reform of the criminal justice system for youth in this country.

Unfortunately, the federal Liberals have failed. They came forward with an act that has now been passed and will be proclaimed next year that is three times as long, that is five times as cumbersome and that will be 10 times as expensive to administer. I have been saying for some considerable period of time, publicly on every occasion that I can, that what the Liberals have done in this regard is unconscionable. I am hopeful that members opposite, be they Liberals or New Democrats, will begin at this time to speak out. When it comes to youth justice in this country, the federal government has dropped the ball.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Now that we have confirmed that the only thing Ontario families can count on with respect to whether or not tests are being performed adequately and properly in private labs are anonymous tipsters, there's something else I want to explore with you. I understand that the tip you received was on May 23—that's when the information was brought into the ministry—and you did not act until June 5. That's some 12 days. You then took a decision to act yesterday, some seven days later, so it took 19 days from the time you received the information for you to act. This is in a post-Walkerton world. You received information about testing that was at a minimum improper. Why did it take you 19 days to act and to make that information public?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I think it's a very good question, and that's the question I think we must investigate. I didn't know until Tuesday evening that

there was even any inclination of this. I didn't get it confirmed until Wednesday morning. I have exactly the same question I've put to the Deputy Minister of the Environment and asked her to investigate why it took so long. I think it took too long—far, far too long—and I can only suggest to the member opposite that when that information comes back to me, I will fully apprise the House.

Mr McGuinty: I can appreciate the minister's very deliberate, calm demeanour and his efforts not to alarm Ontarians. I don't want to alarm them, but neither do I want to know them. The fact of the matter is that it took 19 days between the time you received information and acted on it, and that's on top of the fact that we had to rely on an anonymous tipster to receive that information. We've also been able to confirm today that since you privatized water testing in Ontario, you have failed at any time to put in place a system by which people in the Ministry of the Environment inspected those people who were testing the water. So I ask you on behalf of Ontario families, Minister: knowing this, how is it that we can have any faith, any confidence that you people over there are doing what you're supposed to be doing when it comes to protecting drinking water for Ontario families?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Do you really believe that we didn't or that I didn't take this seriously, when you hear the actions I took from Wednesday morning on, since the knowledge of the testing came forward? I think it's an unfair charge. We acted very quickly. I acted very quickly. The actual investigation that we're asking for is taking place as we speak.

I suppose my position on this issue is that I would like to allow the deputy minister the opportunity to investigate and report back to me. We are now phoning. We've completed phoning every lab. We're visiting the labs as we speak to ensure that they're in fact operating properly. I think it would behoove me to give the good civil service that we have working for us the opportunity to investigate and to determine what happened.

ONTARIO WORKS

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. A couple of weeks ago, the results of a city of Toronto survey regarding the success of the Ontario Works program in Toronto was released. A report in the Toronto Star indicated that people who managed to get off welfare were no better off. Minister, when we implemented the Ontario Works program, we believed that helping people find their way off welfare would improve their lives. Was this report accurate?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I'd like to thank my colleague for the question. People in Niagara Falls are very fortunate to have such a competent member representing them.

I've reviewed the city of Toronto's reports, and I think my colleagues in the House might be surprised to learn that we actually disagree with the Toronto Star's first

reading, and after studying it we're actually pleased with what we've learned.

This is what we have come to understand. First of all, it's clear that our reforms are working. Some 83% of the people surveyed are still off social assistance; 54% indicate their life is better now; 70% of people reported that they have job satisfaction; the average wage rate was twice the minimum wage; and over half of the respondents reported they were better off after leaving social assistance, having gained a sense of satisfaction and confidence. This city of Toronto report confirms what we already knew: our welfare reforms are working. A hand up is better than a handout; that is the way to successful reform in Ontario.

Mr Maves: I want to thank the minister for clarifying that. Those are indeed some impressive numbers. I've always believed that our reforms were working and I've passed that message along to my constituents on many occasions. But they would like to know what programs are available to assist individuals on Ontario Works find employment, and they want to know if these programs are working in my community.

Hon Mrs Elliott: The entire welfare program has been changed to be one of an employment assistance program. I would like to inform the member from Niagara Falls and my colleagues in the House that the Niagara region has experienced a drop of nearly 10% in their caseload from 2001 to 2002. This drop in caseload is encouraging to our Ontario placement numbers. In fact, what this means is a \$2.6-million surplus for Niagara region. This can be directed into their community programs. If we think in terms of the city of Toronto report, where 83% of former welfare recipients report that they're in a job with twice the average wage, that bodes very well for the Niagara region and once again proves that our welfare reforms are highly successful and working to give people a brighter future.

MENINGITIS C

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Deputy Premier. Gregg and Bernadette Maxwell of Ingersoll are in the gallery today to endorse the bill that I presented earlier in their son's name. On March 14 their son, Michael, developed flu-like symptoms, was admitted to hospital, and 21 hours later died of meningitis C. He was 17 years old. This is a tragedy which need not have happened. There is a vaccine to protect against meningitis C which is safe for use even in 2-month-olds, but it's very expensive, usually over \$100 and usually not covered under provincial plans. The other problem is that most families are not even aware of the serious nature of meningitis and that there is a vaccine that can protect their children.

Minister, I think the only way to protect infants and young adults is to have a province-wide immunization program. Will your government adopt my private member's bill so that families like the Maxwells will never experience the kind of tragedy that they have?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I will refer that to the Associate Minister of Health.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I want to begin by offering my sympathy to the family involved and to say today that the government takes public health safety for our children very, very seriously. It is indeed an issue of not only provincial significance and importance but also national importance. Thus, we continue to work with the federal government on a strategy to implement this program. Late last year the Minister of Health, the honourable Tony Clement, wrote to his federal counterpart on this issue and we've not received a response to date. I expect that the new federal Minister of Health will discuss this matter shortly, this matter of common interest. This, hopefully, should be on the top of the agenda for the new federal health minister.

1510

Ms Martel: Minister, your government has introduced and funds a flu vaccine program without any federal support. The provinces of Alberta and Quebec have already implemented province-wide immunization programs, without federal support, to protect infants and young children. It is time the Ontario government followed suit.

This is a serious public health issue. Last year alone, 65 people were infected with meningitis and eight people died. There is no reason for any Ontarian to die of meningitis.

What is required is a commitment by your government to follow suit with Alberta and Quebec: fund a province-wide immunization program against meningitis and fund a public education program so that families understand how important this immunization is. Will you adopt my private member's bill to protect infants and young people in Ontario from meningitis?

Hon Mr Newman: Again, this is an issue of national importance, and that's why we continue to work with the federal government to implement a strategy to deal with this very serious situation. In fact, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Honourable Tony Clement, is meeting today with his federal counterpart, the Honourable Anne McLellan, to discuss that. This subject is on the agenda.

This government is indeed committed to health promotion and disease prevention. We continue to have that as a priority of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. The people of my community are concerned. They learned this morning that the government had once again failed to get its most basic job right. You failed to ensure that our water is safe. They've seen this kind of failure before; it led to the deaths of seven people.

They listened to Ernie Eves promise our water would always be safe to drink, and now their trust has been betrayed. We don't know if the water we have been drinking has been safe.

Minister, after the Walkerton disaster, how could it take 19 days for this to come to light?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): This is a fairly similar question to the one your leader just asked, and I think the response would probably stand. That's something we should allow the Ministry of the Environment to investigate and report on before we start making any brazen allegations and long-term decisions.

I might add that we were the government that actually put a process in place to accredit labs. Previous administrations simply said, "Follow provincial guidelines."

I would say to the member opposite that the response to his question is exactly the same as the response to his leader.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Minister, if Walkerton was the wake-up call, your government hit the snooze button on this issue.

According to you, the Ministry of Environment has been aware of this problem since May 23, but no steps were taken to warn municipalities or the public until yesterday. That's 19 days. If you or your staff had a tip that something was seriously wrong, it should have been acted on immediately. Where was the breakdown in communication in your ministry? Didn't anyone learn anything from Walkerton? It appears that the only thing protecting Ontario citizens right now is tipsters. How could this warning have been delayed by 19 days?

Can you please tell the House today when this internal review is going to be completed and why there was this breakdown in communications, so the citizens of Ontario can be assured we have safe, clean, quality drinking water?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'd like to say to the member opposite that again we should understand that according to the medical officer of health, the chances are virtually nil that water that was tested and sent out was tainted. I think we should understand that and assure the people of this province that that is the case.

I will get back to you as soon as the Deputy Minister of Environment does the investigation.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Yes, I was disappointed, very disappointed they would have heard on May 23 that—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Come to order, please.

Minister, sorry for the interruption.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I appreciate the member for Scarborough-Agincourt suggesting I should have told them this was unacceptable when I became minister. I say to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt that I didn't have a crystal ball. I couldn't possibly have known something like this would come up. I would only have expected that had they had this kind of information on

May 23, they would have acted with due dispatch and informed me. They didn't. I'm giving them the opportunity to explain why they didn't. I think they should have as well.

GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRY

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. Prince Edward county is an up-and-coming area for vineyards and wine production in the future.

Prince Edward county has an interesting history of wine production. Way back in 1867, Dorland Noxon of Prince Edward county won an international award at the Philadelphia Exposition for the wine he had produced in Prince Edward county. Minister, what are you doing to assist areas such as Prince Edward county to enter into the development of vineyards and wineries?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I think we're very excited about the great possibilities in the member's area and in Prince Edward county to help promote new wineries in the new grape-growing area.

Recently we changed the policy governing wine retail stores in the province to help emerging wineries in growing areas like Prince Edward county to have that kind of access. For example, the Waupoos winery in Prince Edward county now has their own store. They can sell more wine, bring in tourists and help create jobs for the local economy. Similarly, I understand VQA Ontario will be entering the area very soon to discuss the merits of joining the VQA and the additional benefits that can bring to wineries in the member's region.

Mr Galt: Approximately two years ago, after many vineyards were planted in Prince Edward county, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario adopted a policy stating that until an area is classed as a designated viticultural area and producing 500 tonnes of wine grapes per year, wineries are limited in their ability to purchase grapes. Before reaching the threshold, any winery that wishes to have a retail store must purchase 50% of their grapes from the local region and the other half must come from an Ontario farm.

It seems unfair to place restrictions on new businesses that are just starting up. Furthermore, in emerging regions there are bound to be fewer grapes simply because the young vines produce less. Therefore, the initial entrepreneurs are penalized compared to those who enter later. Minister, do you support such a policy that is counterproductive to job creation?

Hon Mr Hudak: I appreciate the member for Northumberland's question. He has been a very strong proponent for helping the winery area in Prince Edward county, and of course it helps out Northumberland county as well.

The goal of the ministry is, as it is for the Ernie Eves government, to help promote job creation, especially small businesses in Ontario. We want, as part of this, to help develop a wine region in Prince Edward county to

help tie in local grape production and encourage the land to stay in agricultural use before a winery retail store, for example, is set up.

The success in the Niagara Peninsula has been not only in world-class wines but as a world-class winery region. It has been an international success. I think down the road we'll see something similar in Prince Edward county and we want to support that.

Because of the member's advocacy, VQA Ontario is going to be in his area very soon to help address how they can become a designated viticultural area down the road. But I want to assure the member and those in the House that there are very high standards to achieve that level because it's a standard that we need to keep quite high.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): This is for the Minister of the Environment. The communities of Kingsville, Essex, Lakeshore, Tecumseh and LaSalle, and indeed all the people of Ontario, have the right to safe drinking water. The problem is that we don't seem to be getting it. Instead, we're getting excuses and we're getting delays.

Minister, as has been shown today, it took your ministry and you together fully 19 days to reply to a tip. The government has an obligation to protect the people in this province, and it's your job to ensure that our water is being properly tested, and to do it without tips and to do it without 19-day delays.

Here's what we need to do: implement Dalton McGuinty's safe drinking water action plan, hire nine full-time medical officers of health and put the proper resources in place for the enforcement of regulations. Minister, will you finally take the steps that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals demand are needed to ensure our water is safe to drink?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I don't want to suggest for a moment that the member shouldn't be supporting his leader, and I understand that he's pushing what would be classified as his leader's agenda on water cleanliness, with respect.

I will take my advice, I think, from the learned and knowledgeable Justice O'Connor. Justice O'Connor produced two rather comprehensive, voluminous reports. He has set out in no uncertain terms how he thinks water should be handled in this province.

As a testament to this government, and as a testament to this Premier, not 24 hours after that report was issued, he stood in his place and said, "We will implement all 93 recommendations."

1520

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): First of all, it's unbelievable that the ministry took 19 days to act. The other part of it is also that, earlier today, the minister said you have to have confidence in your water if the medical officers of health haven't issued a water advisory.

Do you know something? Sarnia-Lambton doesn't have a full-time medical officer of health. Remember the first recommendation from the first report that came out a long time ago? It didn't come out two weeks ago.

More than two years later, six months after the Walkerton inquiry's first report, nine regions of Ontario don't have a full-time medical officer of health.

Minister, a full-time medical officer of health is absolutely essential in a crisis like this. Why have you failed to ensure that Sarnia-Lambton and eight other regions have a full-time, permanent medical officer of health? This time we just happen to have gotten lucky.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I don't think the impression should be left that there isn't a medical officer of health for these regions. There are interim medical officers of health for all the regions she speaks about. I appreciate the fact that the member opposite would like to leave the impression that there is no medical officer of health for these regions.

I will say to the member opposite and to the others heckling that there are interim medical officers of health in place. Those interim medical officers of health joined in a conference call with Dr D'Cunha to deal with this issue. I take my hat off to each and every one of them. They handled it professionally and well. This is probably one of the finest times we can deal with our medical officers of health, knowing that they're there to protect the health of the people of the province of Ontario. I'm not going to slam any one of them.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question is for the Minister of Energy and Environment. It has come to my attention that in recent months the Almaguin Highlands, an area in my beautiful riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, has been suffering through numerous power outages of various lengths, some as long as four days and at varying times of day.

I am sure you would agree, Minister, that this inconsistency of power is cause for concern for the people who live and work in the Almaguin Highlands. There are many small business operators, farmers, families and elderly residents who are very concerned about the uncertainty of their power supply and are seeking a solution.

Minister, could you tell the people of Almaguin Highlands and indeed all rural Ontarians what is being done to ensure that Ontario's power supply is not only safe and efficient, but reliable?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): It's a good question the member opposite asks and it's one of the questions that kind of surrounds in a rather circumlocutious way the Hydro One debate. Why it is that way is because we've often had this difficulty with severe weather patterns and downing of lines that caused outages. Some outages are patently unreasonable and for incredible lengths of time.

I want to say to the member opposite, as part of the new mandate to regulate electricity distribution and transmission in the province, the Ontario Energy Board will be monitoring service standards for all electrical utilities, including Hydro One, and taking corrective action when necessary.

It also speaks to the argument I've been making very forcefully in this House. Standards haven't been maintained by Hydro One. There needs to be a huge capital investment into the infrastructure of the Hydro One wires. I make these arguments to the people of the province of Ontario and to you, and I get accused of fearmongering by the chief fearmongerer of the province of Ontario, the leader of the third party.

Mr Miller: Thank you, Minister. I am still on our side of the House. I know I did vote against the government this morning, but I'm still on your side.

I'm sure that those men and women who call rural Ontario home will be pleased to see your ministry is putting forth a solution. In the meantime, would you please explain whom the people of Almaguin Highlands should contact when they are experiencing difficulties with their power supply to ensure appropriate action is being taken to deliver reliable power to their homes and businesses?

Hon Mr Stockwell: First let me apologize to one of the finest members in our caucus, a second-generation Conservative, and I apologize. It completely slipped from my tongue.

Anyone expecting an outage or any other reliability problem should report the problem to Hydro One by calling the contact number on their hydro bill. If problems persist, they can be brought to the attention of the Ontario Energy Board by calling, toll-free, 1-877-632-2727. The number again is 1-877-632-2727. I'd encourage the members opposite, if you have these kinds of complaints as well, please also get them to call that number at the Ontario Energy Board or Hydro One, because we want to try and solve these problems. But the best solution we can use is to continue to have this kind of representation by local members representing their constituents.

WATER QUALITY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, as you know, there's a long-standing tradition in this House for ministerial responsibility when something goes wrong. You take the credit for the good things that your bureaucracy does. But today you refuse to take any responsibility whatsoever for the latest drinking water crisis.

Minister, you know that this should not have happened, particularly after what happened in Walkerton. There is no room for error any more since people died as a result of drinking tainted water.

I am asking you again: why are you not taking responsibility? You're the man at the top. You have the responsibility. You are not taking that responsibility to-

day. You are hiding behind your bureaucracy. I'm asking you again to take responsibility for this water testing crisis we have now and do the right thing and step down as Minister of the Environment.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Well, I respectfully disagree with you. You're suggesting I'm not taking responsibility. I'm here in question period in a process known as parliamentary democracy. I am standing before this House answering every question you give me as directly as I can. I haven't avoided any; I haven't escaped on it. The only point I've made to you is that I don't have absolute confirmation of why it took so long. I have asked them to investigate, and I've given you my undertaking that when that investigation is done, I will report back to this House.

I don't think I've in any way tried to duck this issue, duck my responsibility or remove the responsibility from my own shoulders and pass it on to anyone else. I'm standing here for an hour answering every one of your questions. You may not like my answers, but don't tell me I'm ducking responsibility. I'm answering your questions.

Ms Churley: Minister, this has got nothing to do with whether or not you're answering questions. What you are saying today in response to the questions is what any minister would say: "Conducting an investigation," "Doing this," "Doing that," but acting all innocent when asked when you were told about this and saying you acted quickly.

The reality is, Minister, Walkerton happened. The crisis in the water testing should never have happened again. There are hundreds of thousands of people in this province who now have lost confidence in their drinking water when they turn on the tap. You are the minister responsible. This should not have happened again in the province of Ontario, yet it did.

Minister, I'm asking you again: will you do the right thing, will you step down as Minister of the Environment and allow somebody else to take over who actually has the time to deal with protecting our water and our environment?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I've tried my best to handle this in a non-partisan way with respect to the issue yesterday. I ask you: when I took you into my confidence as well as the Liberal critic and gave you this information, I ask you, how did this information end up on the wire before the information was released by the MOH? How did that happen? There were only two people who had this information, and I've talked to one of them. So if you're asking for confidence in my ability, I'm asking about the confidence in taking you into my confidence and giving you this information to protect the people of the province. So I don't think you have any room to lecture me with respect to how I do my job and the confidentiality and the work I do to get this done.

The question should be asked of you: can you stand before this House today and tell this House that you didn't go to the wire service immediately after that meet-

ing and in fact do exactly what you promised me you wouldn't do?

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to engage in a debate this afternoon on water safety in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

1530

PETITIONS

WATER QUALITY

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's families need to know that their water is safe;

"Whereas Ernie Eves is not protecting the drinking water of Ontario families;

"Whereas Ernie Eves recklessly cut the Ministry of the Environment budget by over 40% and laid off one third of the staff;

"Whereas Ernie Eves's cuts to the Ministry of Environment continue to put our drinking water at risk, despite the tragic deaths at Walkerton;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have outlined an emergency safe water drinking plan that includes hiring an additional 100 environment inspectors, drinking water experts, and enforcement officers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that Ontario's drinking water is safe for our families and to immediately implement Dalton McGuinty's safe water action plan."

I'm proud to affix my signature to this petition.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's families need to know that their water is safe;

"Whereas Ernie Eves is not protecting the drinking water of Ontario families;

"Whereas Ernie Eves recklessly cut the Ministry of the Environment budget by over 40% and laid off one third of the staff;

"Whereas Ernie Eves's cuts to the Ministry of the Environment continue to put our drinking water at risk, despite the tragic deaths at Walkerton;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have outlined an emergency safe water drinking plan that includes hiring an additional 100 environment inspectors, drinking water experts and enforcement officers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that Ontario's drinking water is safe for our families and to immediately implement Dalton McGuinty's safe water action plan."

I'm happy to affix my signature to this most excellent petition and would recommend it to the honourable heckling minister.

HIGHWAY 522

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We, the taxpayers, members of the communities and the people who have to travel along Highway 522 in the district of Parry Sound want to bring to your attention the poor condition of Highway 522."

I agree with this, and I will affix my signature.

STUDENTS' IMMIGRATION STATUS

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas children are being denied an education on the basis of their immigration status, we ask that the Legislative Assembly enforce the laws of the province of Ontario to ensure that all children residing in Ontario have equal rights to education.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop denying children in Ontario access to education. School boards in Ontario are breaking the law by refusing to admit children to school on the basis of their immigration status. This violates Ontario's Education Act, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"According to section 49.1 of the Education Act, a school board may not refuse admittance of a child under the age of 18 to an elementary or secondary school based on the child's immigration status or the immigration status of the child's parent or guardian. 'A person who is otherwise entitled to be admitted to a school and who is less than 18 years of age shall not be refused admission because the person or person's parent or guardian is unlawfully in Canada.'

"Children should not be treated as second-class citizens due to their immigration status. We call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to allow all children to access education regardless of their immigration status."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas children are being denied an education on the basis of their immigration status, we ask that the Legislative Assembly enforce the laws of the province of Ontario to ensure that all children residing in Ontario have equal rights to education.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"School boards in Ontario are breaking the law by refusing to admit children to school on the basis of their immigration status. This violates Ontario's Education Act, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"According to section 49.1 of the Education Act, a school board may not refuse admittance to a child under the age of 18 to an elementary or a secondary school based on the child's immigration status or the immigration status of the child's parent or guardian. A child 'who is otherwise entitled to be admitted to a school and who is less than 18 years of age shall not be refused admission because the person or the person's parent or guardian is unlawfully in Canada.'" That is a quote in this petition from section 49.1 of the Education Act.

"Children should not be treated as second-class citizens due to their immigration status. We call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to allow all children to access education regardless of their immigration status."

Mr Speaker, there are over 1,100 people who signed their signature. There were dozens here today in front of the Legislature—you heard some of the music before—and, more important, dozens of children who currently are not in school or whose education is restricted. So I very gratefully acknowledge their efforts and affix my signature to this petition.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have another petition addressed to the Legislature of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

Speaker, I concur with the petitioners and I'm glad to forward this to the Clerk.

HOMELESSNESS

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): "To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario provincial government has totally withdrawn itself from building new social housing projects in this province, therefore endangering the lives of the less fortunate and residents who can't afford paying the high cost of rent;

"Whereas the Ontario government should recognize that there is a serious shortage of affordable housing in this province;

"Whereas the Ontario government should recognize that the homeless situation in this province has reached a crisis proportion and that some measure must be taken to remedy the situation;

"Whereas the Ontario government should recognize that the hostel system wasn't meant to be for permanent housing but for temporary shelters; ...

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"We are asking that the Legislature see that the government take actions to end the homeless situation in Ontario with any means that are at its disposal."

This petition is signed by folks from Napanee, and I'm very happy to add my signature to this petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have a further petition, which comes to my attention from the Toronto District School Board, entitled, "Toronto Students Deserve a Fair Chance."

"We, the undersigned, join the Toronto District School Board in its call for the government of Ontario to begin an immediate review of the funding formula and restore adequate funding for Toronto students and schools.

"We call upon the government of Ontario to put the needs of our children and our schools first and to provide a level of funding that allows all of our students to be successful in their educational experience.

"We call upon the government of Ontario to work with the school boards across Ontario so that all of us charged with delivering education can ensure that students can succeed in school."

It's signed by residents from the various school communities. I concur with the petitioners and I will affix my signature to it.

1540

ALTERNATIVE FUEL

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): "Whereas the Ontario government has a tradition of bold environmental initiatives; and

"Whereas the select committee on alternative fuels was given a mandate to investigate and recommend ways of reducing Ontario's dependence on fossil fuels while

expanding access to environmentally friendly sustainable energy; and

"Whereas the select committee on alternative fuels has recommended the following:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement all of the 141 recommendations of the select committee on alternative fuels made in their final report tabled June 5, 2002. Full details of these recommendations are attached and form part of this petition:

A.1 Ontario government policy

"(1) The Ontario government shall develop an alternative fuel and energy strategy to establish a framework for a coordinated approach to: (a) increase the use of renewable energy and fuel sources in both the immediate and long term; (b) reduce Ontario's reliance upon carbon-based fuel sources; (c) reduce adverse impacts upon the environment; (d) ensure that the relative cost of different energy sources, fiscal implications, energy security, impact on job creation, export development and the provincial economy are all considered; (e) support innovative research and development in the alternative energy fields that yield long-term economic, environmental and social benefits; (f) and ensure that energy conservation and efficiency are improved.

"(2) The Ministry of Environment and Energy shall be the lead in formulating an Ontario alternative fuel/energy strategy. Other pertinent ministries and agencies shall be consulted including: enterprise, opportunity and innovation; agriculture and food; training, colleges, and universities; education; finance; Management Board; municipal affairs and housing; natural resources; native affairs; northern development and mines; transportation; Ontario Power Generation; Hydro One and/or successor companies; Ontario Energy Board; Independent Electricity Market Operator; and Natural Resources Canada. A coordinating branch shall be established within the Ministry of Environment and Energy to deal with alternative fuel/energy policy and programs. An independent technical advisory group reporting to the Minister of Environment and Energy shall be appointed to advise on alternative fuel/energy technologies and levels of assistance to individual technologies.

"(3) An Ontario Energy Research Institute shall be established by March 1, 2003, to advance the manufacture and use of alternative fuel and energy products in Ontario. The institute should have responsibility for oversight of all alternative fuel/energy projects and be a schedule 3 agency reporting to the Ministry of Environment and Energy. It should have an annual budget of \$40 million and a guaranteed minimum 10-year lifespan. Its functions should include: policy development and implementation, including product specifications and standards in conjunction with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority; development of partnerships with the private sector and post-secondary institutions; testing of technologies at a demonstration site, with a \$10-million funding commitment over three years; development of an educational program, including a comprehensive Web

site and alternative fuels/energy component within the elementary and secondary educational science curriculum, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education; securing of matching federal and private sector funding; funding programs to promote alternative fuels/energy installations at Ontario universities, community colleges; working with municipalities on energy planning; and monitoring and assessment of worldwide developments in alternative fuels/energy.

"(4) The Ontario government shall undertake a comprehensive legislative and regulatory review to consider amendments to legislation/regulations regarding alternative fuels/energy, including energy efficiency and conservation by June 30, 2003.

"(5) The Ontario government's 'core business' and related 'core activities' within all relevant Ontario ministry and agency business plans shall be revised to establish priorities for alternative fuel and energy, including energy efficiency and conservation. Performance measures shall be developed for the increased use of alternative fuels/energy in Ontario ministry/agency operations.

"(6) The committee supports the development of a registry for airborne contaminants by the Ministry of Environment and Energy that includes annual reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and other smog forming pollutants by large and small emitting sectors. Relevant work of Environment Canada, the US Environmental Protection Agency and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, should also be consulted.

"(7) The Ontario government shall use a 'Life Cycle Costing' approach to assess costs and impacts of new fuel/energy technologies. In assessing the costs of new alternative fuel/energy sources, comparisons should be made with the costs of new conventional sources of fuel/energy."

There are recommendations 8 through 141, and I look forward to a response from the ministry to all those important recommendations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The time for petitions has ended.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Mr Speaker, I wonder if I might give the House an indication of the business for next week.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is there consent? It is agreed.

Mr Gilchrist: Pursuant to standing order 55, I have a statement of the business of the House for next week.

Monday afternoon will be budget day. On Monday evening, we will continue debate on Bill 80, the Hydro One Inc. Directors and Officers Act.

On Tuesday afternoon we will debate Bill 81, the Nutrient Management Act. On Tuesday evening we will be debating Bill 80.

Wednesday afternoon's business is still to be determined. On Wednesday evening we will debate the budget motion.

On Thursday morning during private members' business we will discuss ballot item 51, standing in the name of Mr Curling, and ballot item 52, standing in the name of Mr Gerretsen. On Thursday afternoon we will debate the budget motion. Thursday evening's business is still to be determined.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HYDRO ONE INC. DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LES ADMINISTRATEURS ET LES DIRIGEANTS DE HYDRO ONE INC.

Mr Gilchrist, on behalf of Mr Stockwell, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One Inc. and its subsidiaries / Projet de loi 80, Loi concernant les administrateurs et les dirigeants de Hydro One Inc. et de ses filiales.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Member for Scarborough East, I want to just clarify your position.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I'm making these comments in my capacity as parliamentary assistant to the government House leader.

The Acting Speaker: That is the information I was looking for. The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough East and parliamentary assistant for the leadoff time for the government caucus.

Mr Gilchrist: I'll say at the outset that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Etobicoke Centre.

There is no argument that the passage of Bill 80 is a necessary action the government must take to rebuild confidence in a strong and reliable electricity system for Ontario and its future. The electricity consumers of Ontario must be sure that all parts of the system—the generation, the transmission and the distribution—are working in their interest. In all respects, those involved in providing electricity to consumers must not only do the right thing; they must be seen to be doing the right thing.

That, for example, is why consumer protection has always been this government's first priority when we were considering the restructuring of Ontario's electricity sector. We have made it clear right from day one that we put electricity customers first in the design of our new market and in the government's commitment to fix the problems of the past, to safeguard our future electricity supply and to ensure that safe, reliable power will continue to be supplied to consumers at a competitive cost.

May 1 marked a very exciting day, a new era in Ontario's history when we opened our electricity market to full competition. And the transition was quite successful. In fact, it could be argued it was this year's Y2K. There is no doubt there was a great deal of fear-mongering on the other side. The Chicken Littles were out in full force suggesting there would be rolling

blackouts and rolling brownouts. I know the leader of the third party put his picture and a light bulb on the side of a bus and went out on the dim bulb tour and suggested to people all across Ontario that they were facing nothing short of the Dark Ages.

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The only thing that has changed since May 1 is that prices have gone down. The lights didn't go out. Prices have averaged 3.3 cents a kilowatt hour compared to the reference point, the price that every utility in Ontario was paying on April 30, which was 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. That has to be seen as an excellent start to our plan to restructure the electricity sector. We've shown, even in the wake of the first brief heat wave of the summer, that a competitive market, a market founded on business principles, works.

As we do this, we are not deregulating the electricity sector. If there is a word that has been bandied about these last few months that is more inaccurate than that, I don't know what it could be. The fact of the matter is there are actually more regulations, particularly regulations designed to protect consumers in all aspects of the electricity marketplace, than ever in the province's history. We are not going to abandon the government's responsibility to protect the people of Ontario, the electricity consumers of Ontario, in every possible way. In fact, for the first time ever in this province, the transmission and distribution of electricity will be strictly regulated by the Ontario Energy Board in order to protect customers. In the past, believe it or not, the old Ontario Hydro regulated itself.

You'll remember back to those halcyon days when we had only one telephone company in Canada. You'll remember how delightful it was every year when Bell Canada would go to the federal regulators, the CRTC, and they would ask for, and invariably receive, a cost increase far above inflation, with no recognition of the need to provide reliable, low-cost service to people for a very essential service, a telephone service. That was the hallmark of the phone business in Canada.

Ten years ago that market was opened up to competition and we have seen the benefits. Now we have at least two local utilities, we have at least four cellphone companies and we have literally an infinite number of long-distance service providers. Instead of measuring the cost of phone service in dollars per minute, particularly for calls to Europe, we now measure it in minutes per dollar, with rates as low as seven cents a minute for international calls.

The members opposite haven't anywhere, through the debate on Bill 58—and I strongly suspect we won't hear it in the debate on this bill—challenged the evolution in the phone marketplace so that somehow they can make a case that that evolution is different than what we will see when another regulated monopoly, namely the electricity system, is transformed, just like the phone system was, into a competitive model.

The government has taken some pretty bold first steps with the opening of the marketplace, but Bill 80 is a further clear demonstration that this government is pre-

pared to take more steps to ensure that at all times and in every way all parts of the system, regardless of whether it is publicly or privately held, are there to fairly serve the consumers of Ontario.

Moving forward from the May 1 start-out, there is no doubt the new marketplace will evolve and mature as market participants gain experience and the tools and processes are further refined. There will be new participants who invest in the industry and competition will be strengthened. It's a decidedly bright future—pun intended.

It therefore saddens me that Bill 80 had to be brought forward at all. It's without question a necessary response to a quite legitimate consumer and public concern. The public and this government are absolutely right to have been concerned about the expenditures and the efficiency of Hydro One, which is a key part of the electricity system. I am heartened that through Bill 80 the government has taken decisive action on the platinum-plated compensation packages at Hydro One. But it is unfortunate that it has taken attention away from the very significant success story that is the overall restructuring of Ontario's electricity system.

As the market matures and as the government puts forward the remaining steps in restructuring Ontario's electricity system, we should see other benefits, including greater efficiencies, better service and innovation. As with other jurisdictions that have successfully made the transition to competition, we firmly believe that market competition, commercial discipline and strong regulation are the best guarantees of reasonable prices for customers over the long term. But I stress again that this is most certainly not done in the absence of government or regulation.

In the area of generation, the Independent Electricity Market Operator, IMO, must protect the interests of customers with respect to the reliability and the quality of electricity generation throughout Ontario. Through Bill 80, this government is sending a strong signal that even as the options are considered on the future of Hydro One, Ontario's transmission utility, we will not tolerate actions by that company that show such blatant disregard for the interests of its ratepayers and the taxpayers of Ontario. I am confident that the new board of directors of Hydro One, recently appointed by the Minister of Environment and Energy, will take the necessary steps to restore full consumer confidence that Hydro One is being managed in their interests and that it's operating fairly and honestly.

The proposed legislation, like all this government's electricity restructuring legislation, is legislation with clear direction, with strength, with teeth. It's not a pie-in-the-sky wish list of what might be; it ensures for the people of Ontario what will be. Not only does it direct Hydro One's new board to address the compensation question for the future; it takes real steps to nullify the excesses of the recent past. It's legislation that actively protects the people of Ontario from actions and decisions that put private interests ahead of public responsibility and fairness, just as at the retail level we've protected

consumers by putting in place tough consumer protection laws for energy retailers which require them to operate fairly and honestly. This consumer protection legislation is a clear example of the standards we expect from all parts of the electricity system and all those involved in it and the steps the government's prepared to take to ensure that what is done is going to be the right thing for Ontarians.

We've provided the Ontario Energy Board with the tools it needs to oversee the retailing practices of marketers and deal with those engaging in questionable practices. For example, all retailers must be licensed by the OEB, and as a condition of their licences, they must follow the electricity retailer code of conduct that establishes guidelines and standards. The code requires sales people to carry photo identification when retailing door to door, to indicate that they don't represent a distribution utility, to clearly state the price and other terms and to provide a clearly printed contract. The offer must clearly indicate the price, any other fees, the length of the contract and any other terms, such as cancellation charges, renewal terms and the transferral or assignment of the contract. Retailers must give a customer ample time to understand an offer without pressure or harassment. No customer is required to show their electricity bill or any other information to a retailer unless they decide to sign a contract with that retailer. Where the company can't resolve a problem, the retailer is obligated to refer customers to the OEB, and they will administer an independent consumer complaints resolution process.

I think all members of the House would agree that as a rule all Ontarians, be they electricity retailers, Hydro executives or politicians, respect the public interest and are honest and caring citizens. Still, from time to time, it's important for government to lay down the rules and give direction to clarify that public interest. That is of course what Bill 80 is really about.

Similarly, in our efforts to ensure consumer comfort with all aspects of the new electricity system, Bill 58, also recently introduced into this House, will do a whole lot more to improve upon the consumer protections that are already in place. One of its strongest features will be an energy consumers' bill of rights, a first in this province. The bill of rights is going to require retailers to have their contracts reaffirmed by customers within 15 to 30 days after they originally signed. It will also stop the practice of automatic renewals for contracts at the end of their term, so-called negative option billing.

If the legislation currently before the House is passed, customers who now have automatic renewal clauses have no need to worry. The bill of rights will replace the negative option with a requirement that customers will have to reaffirm the renewal of their existing deals. If there are any problems, the Ontario Energy Board, headed by Floyd Laughren, has the authority to levy financial penalties against a retailer or revoke or suspend its licence completely.

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Just as this government has demonstrated zero tolerance for platinum-plated compensation at Hydro

One, the OEB has zero tolerance for anyone engaging in questionable marketing practices. This was demonstrated on April 25 when the OEB's director of licensing levied significant fines on two electricity retailers for violations of the code of conduct. That's certainly not what I would characterize as deregulation. Instead, it's a balance system of private sector activity coupled with protection of the public interest, just as Bill 80 is intended to deal exclusively with the problem we have at Hydro One.

Similarly, on the generation side, the IMO can take strong steps to ensure that generators operate fairly and in the public interest. I know that in Bill 58 the government is taking additional steps to ensure that the IMO can do this job even more effectively. As Bill 80 demonstrates, the government is prepared to take real action, quickly and decisively.

The only shame is that the members opposite, despite countless protestations during question period and outside to the media of how they were equally reviled—they claim—with the pay and the severance package; how they were equally offended at the transgression of the normal process through which a board of directors would respond to their fiduciary obligation to their shareholders; and how they cared just as much about the taxpayers and the ratepayers in this province—it's a shame that when they were offered the opportunity not once but on a number of occasions to grant immediate second and third readings of this bill to put in force all of these new protections, they proved they were on the side of the fat cats and not on the side of the ratepayers in the province of Ontario, and for that they should be ashamed.

This government has demonstrated it will take the steps to ensure that any aspect of the electricity system which is seen to not be functioning in a way acceptable to the people of Ontario will be corrected. This commitment to action is a reflection of the government's resolve to protect the consumer and, through all of its legislation on electricity restructuring, to ensure that we have a reliable, affordable supply of electricity.

The government of Ontario recognizes that consumers consider the electricity system an important and critical part of their lives. Without a doubt, consumers are increasingly aware of how that system does and should operate. They will have, and have had, an important role in putting forward their expectations for the system. The people of this province have opinions, increasingly informed opinions, about what is right and what is wrong, about the delivery of electricity in Ontario. On issues like the Ontario Hydro debt, the \$38-billion debt of this vaunted monopoly that our friends opposite would have us maintain, matched with only \$17 billion in assets, that's what they want to defend. That's what we want to fix.

But whether it's the issues of Ontario Hydro debt, or the transmission lands and who owns them, or executive salaries, the people have made their views known, and the government has taken action. I want to say that from the very outset of the tenure of the new Premier and the new minister and myself as the parliamentary assistant,

we each took our respective jobs with an absolute commitment to set forth and find all the possible options on how we could maintain that supply of affordable electricity and ensure that there's enough private sector involvement to guarantee greater discipline in the operations of Hydro One; ensure there was enough money to maintain the infrastructure of that transmission grid, an estimated \$550 million that will be required this year and each and every year into the foreseeable future to make sure that those wires stay up and efficiently transport the electricity our businesses and our homes rely on; and to make sure that we respect consumers, and make sure that their rights and responsibilities are fairly balanced in the design of the new system. The government could take some credit for the interest and knowledge Ontarians have about the electricity system, an important part of our lives. Informed consumers are protected consumers.

I'm immensely proud that as we stand here right now debating this bill, it follows up on over two and a half years of consumer education—literally millions and millions of inserts sent out in the monthly electricity bills, newspaper ads and radio and TV ads—telling people there were bold changes about to take place, changes designed to make sure we had an increased power supply, greater consumer choice, greater investments in new technology and innovation throughout the electricity system. People had two and a half years to prepare for these exciting new changes.

The members opposite may not have been reading their papers and watching TV and were certainly not reading the countless publications that came out from the former Minister of Energy, Science and Technology, but I can tell you that my constituents certainly knew what was happening and they have told me loud and clear that they are very happy with the changes they've seen so far and they are very excited about the fact that they are going to have consumer choice that they've never had before.

The Minister of Environment and Energy will continue an extensive consumer education program aimed at developing this broader awareness of electricity restructuring and informing consumers. Possibly for the first time, Ontarians can give considered thought to how their electricity system is structured today and what it should look like in the future.

The current public discussion about Hydro One is a part of that. Information and educational materials have been provided over the last two years, as I mentioned, through brochures, fax sheets, bill inserts, a toll-free information line, a ministry Web site, town hall meetings, seniors' information sessions and radio, print and television advertising. In fact, since 1999—let me give you the hard numbers—the ministry has distributed 1.3 million brochures and 11 million utility bill inserts in an effort to inform consumers well before the market opened. Informed consumers are empowered consumers, and this government will continue to ensure that all customers have access to the information they need.

As we move forward with the restructuring of our electricity market, we will continue to put the needs of

Ontario's electricity customers first and to ensure that their interests are protected. Bill 80, by taking strong action on the issue of executive salaries and perks within the transmission system, speaks loudly of the government's commitment to protecting all the interests of electricity consumers.

The bill has to be seen very much in the context of these overall changes. The bill itself is very focused. It deals exclusively with the problems at Hydro One, but it can't be taken in isolation from Bill 58 and from a myriad of other changes we've brought forward.

One of the other prospective changes in the electricity marketplace—"changes," plural—will flow from the recent report tabled by the select committee on alternative fuel sources. Just a week ago, an all-party committee of this Legislature unanimously adopted a report with 141 different recommendations on how we could put in place the most progressive, the most aggressive, the most comprehensive package of consumer and businesses incentives, as well as new product standards, to guarantee—let me underline the word "guarantee"—the future air quality in this province, to make dramatic improvements to ensure that the health consequences of the kind of smog that we inherited when we were elected in 1995 and that, quite frankly, has vexed this province going back for decades, those problems, would become a thing of the past. Whether it was the application of wind, solar, biomass, fuel cell or any other new technology, whether it was the pursuit of new battery storage technology that a company here in Ontario has developed that would allow the capture of the otherwise wasted power in off-peak times and feed that power back into the grid during times of peak demand that would allow us almost instantaneously to reduce or even eliminate our reliance on coal, diesel oil and natural gas, those technologies are there today.

What is perhaps most striking about the committee report is that every one of those 141 recommendations, it probably could be argued, has some similarity to a program that exists in some other jurisdiction across North America or around the world. Each one has a counterpart, but no jurisdiction anywhere in the world has implemented the entire spectrum of recommendations that the committee brought forward. So while some jurisdictions have put in place what's known as a renewable portfolio standard and have said that by regulation, by law, every utility must buy a certain percentage of their power from green sources—wind, solar etc—not all of them have. Others have created tax incentives for the use of wind turbines or the erection of solar panels on roofs or the use of solar panels as cladding on the sides of government buildings. There are jurisdictions that have moved to cleaner gasoline, that have created incentives for the use of hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles.

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When you go through the complete list of 141 recommendations, what you read isn't Buck Rogers in the 25th Century. It is a listing of some thoughtful, well-researched, very doable policy initiatives that, if

implemented, would allow us quite accurately, quite honestly to brag all around the world that we have put in place the toughest air quality standards, the greatest guarantees for future great air quality and the most aggressive strategy to attract the jobs that come from the manufacture and assembly and use of many of these new technologies, particularly wind turbines, photovoltaic cells, fuel cells etc.

I think back to a report done, organized by my father, in fact, back in 1986. I was very privileged to sit in on the deliberations of what was a panel of Canada's best scientists and industrialists on the future of hydrogen back in 1986. I remember that their conclusion was that by now, 15 years later, there would be \$400 billion a year in exports of this technology, never mind all the local applications and environmental benefits locally by moving to a hydrogen environment instead of a traditional gasoline environment for use in our cars and our trucks etc.

While we may have missed the opportunity to get that head start and to keep up with some other jurisdictions that have made significant investments, particularly Germany and Japan, the members of the committee from all three parties recommended—and I think I can say strongly believe that we haven't missed the opportunity to catch up—that the government, and all parties, presumably, should continue to move forward and take these recommendations and see them enacted.

There is no doubt that the application of these recommendations will involve many other entities. It will involve the federal government, municipal governments and the private sector as well.

It was interesting to read a report just this past week that a very large environmental group in Ontario recognized that the return to service of at least seven of the eight nuclear reactors that have been down since 1998 will guarantee a greater supply of power than is currently supplied by all our coal plants put together. What a refreshing change to see a group that traditionally might have shied away from saying nice things about nuclear power recognize that there is a pecking order, and that the most offensive technology out there right now is the one that generates the greatest amount of air pollution. That would be the combustion of coal. As you go down the list, it's basically a function of the amount of carbon in the fuel itself that determines where it should be in that pecking order. Of course, at the bottom of the list you'll find water or hydraulic sources and nuclear. There is no carbon by-product from their use and they should be seen in that light as the most environmentally benign, the most environmentally progressive technologies we could be using in this province.

There is also no doubt that we need the federal government to co-operate with us. I was particularly struck that the committee was able to find a number of legal precedents in areas that constitutionally folks in this chamber have traditionally shied away from involving themselves in.

I think of things such as the operation of railroads. Clearly, the overall regulation and licensing of railroads

is a federal responsibility, but in the operation of railroads or the operation of anything else, any other engine of any kind, the courts have ruled that if there is an environmental component, the provinces have the right to set the standards. That's why in our report we talk about the need to require that locomotives burn at least the same quality diesel fuel that cars and trucks operating on the road use today. That will make a dramatic improvement in and of itself.

We've gone further. We discovered that Irving Oil down in the Maritimes already has moved to something called Auto Makers' Choice. It is a worldwide standard of super ultra clean gasoline. Irving is making it today and so is a company called MacEwen's that operates down in the Ottawa Valley, and they deserve great credit because there's no federal law, there's no provincial law, that made them implement and made them invest in the reconfiguring of their refineries to be able to produce this far superior product. But they've done that. They're marketing it.

If governments across this country simply made that change, required every gas station to be supplying that super ultra clean standard of gas, it would be the equivalent of taking two million cars off the road tomorrow—two million fewer cars would be the equivalent of the combustion of that cleaner fuel.

There were some utterly staggering opportunities presented to the committee. I am truly struck by the fact that we didn't even have to take any votes. The Liberals and the NDP actually agreed with all the government suggestions. It was certainly a change from the normal procedures in this House, but I want to give credit where it's due. Members of all three parties guaranteed that on behalf of their respective caucuses they would sign off on this report.

Now it's before us, as are a myriad of other pieces of legislation, designed to move us forward.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

The Acting Speaker: Please check and see if there is a quorum in the House.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough East.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am struck by the fact that the member from the third party was so keen to ensure that a wider audience was there to hear my comments. I know he's listening with rapt attention, having been unable to participate in the committee's work. I hope he's had a chance to read the report of the select committee; it's available on the Internet. Even having completed the report, we as parliamentarians now are keenly interested in feedback from people who have a chance to read these recommendations, critique them, tell us whether we've gone too far, whether the time frames we've set are too aggressive or

not aggressive enough. We need to hear that feedback, and I'm immensely grateful to the individuals and the companies that have taken the time to respond to the recommendations in the report.

For those of you with computer access, the report can be found at www.ontla.on.ca, the Ontario Legislative Assembly Web site. Then just click on "Committees" and you will find a copy of the final report in PDF format on that Web site.

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It's extremely exciting, and we really have to see all these things as a package. No one piece of legislation dealing with electricity restructuring can be seen to stand on its own. It really is a package, a comprehensive approach to the changes that have to be wrought to the complete system, from generation all the way to the ultimate use in our houses and our factories.

We all recognize—at least we on this side of the House recognize—that having an adequate supply of affordably priced electricity moved Ontario to the forefront industrially not just in eastern North America but, one could argue, worldwide. For the better part of a century, Ontario Hydro served the consumers of this province very well. Through the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, we had one of the lowest, if not the lowest, prices for electricity anywhere in North America. When General Motors wanted to open a new car plant, prominently on their checklist would have been the cost of electricity. Their decision was to open a plant in Oshawa or expand an existing plant in Oshawa or build an engine plant elsewhere in Ontario. Chrysler, Ford and other large manufacturers went through exactly the same thought processes.

We lost that competitive edge starting in the 1980s as a result of some very foolish decisions relating to Darlington, the nuclear plant east of town. The government of the day made the mistake, I would argue, of allowing Ontario Hydro to build the nuclear plant on its own when they had received an offer for half that amount from the manufacturer itself, Atomic Energy of Canada. So in the 1980s and increasingly in the 1990s, we lost that competitive edge, we lost that price advantage, we lost the ability to leverage low prices as one of the ways to attract new jobs and investment.

It's a marvel to us on this side of the House that notwithstanding what happened at Ontario Hydro, we've been able to see the creation of over 866,000 net new jobs. Businesses still went out and made the investment, built the new plants, built the new stores and hired 866,000 more people than were working in 1995. Arguably, 600,000 of them came off government assistance, came off welfare—a great success story, but no thanks to Ontario Hydro and its price structure.

The bills we've brought forward are clearly designed to reverse that trend, to guarantee that consumers have adequate and well-priced electricity and to guarantee they have consumer choice. For the first time ever, if you want to build a wind turbine, if you want to clad a building with solar panels, you will have the right to sell

any excess power back into the grid. As a consumer, you're going to have the right to buy green power. If you don't like the fact that OPG generates some of its power from coal, you have a chance to put your money where your mouth is and pay that one or two cents extra per kilowatt hour but have the satisfaction of knowing you're in on the ground floor of a dramatic change in how electricity is generated here in Ontario and around the world.

We've given you that choice with the opening of the marketplace. We've given clear direction, under Bill 58, for further changes that have to take place at Hydro One to bring discipline to that company. And in Bill 80, we've gone the final step in saying that the shareholders of Hydro One and any other crown corporation come first, that the board of directors is responsible to the shareholders, not the other way around. This government stands four-square with consumers and electricity rate-payers: we will not tolerate shoddy business practices, and we will not tolerate irresponsible behaviour on the part of the board or senior administration in any crown corporation. We're going to put ratepayers first. That's what Bill 80 does.

It's not too late for the Liberals and New Democrats to sign on and say they want to move forward today and give second and third readings to this bill.

With that, I want to share the balance of my time with the member from Halton.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): It's my privilege to enter this debate and talk about Ontario Hydro and Hydro One, where it's going and how we might get to the future we all want to get to.

The objectives of this bill are important to review. First of all, it formally removes the directors of Hydro One Inc from the board of Hydro One and its subsidiaries. I think what a board of directors is expected to do when it sits on a public company or a private company is important to understand. They review the most critical directions that this entity, whether it be a public entity or a private entity, is headed down. What road is it going to take? What is the critical path it might move in?

This board of directors that was in charge of Hydro One was somewhat lax, in the opinion of most Ontarians, and certainly very lax in my opinion, as to how they treated their position and their duties under their appointments as directors of Hydro One.

This act also authorizes the appointment of the board members as necessary until the next annual meeting of Hydro One. That happened last week and they appointed what I think is a pretty interesting list of people to run the affairs of Hydro One. There were three former politicians on that interim board, one being Murray Elston, a former cabinet minister for the Liberal government under David Peterson and a man who is well recognized in Ontario as being someone who has contributed strongly to this province, who stands in good stead with the people of Ontario and is very concerned about the future of this province. I think he will do a marvellous job representing the best interests—after all, that's really what a board of

directors does; it represents the best interests of the people of Ontario, or in this case the shareholders, the people of Ontario—of Hydro One.

Second, another appointment on that interim board was Darcy McKeough, another former Conservative member, someone who, after a politician's life, ran Union Gas. Union Gas is a power utility, much the same as Hydro One, so he understands the power business. Whether it be electricity or natural gas, he understands that business and will be able to make strong contributions to the board, given his background and his experience in that area.

The third politician who was appointed was Bob Rae, a former Premier of the province, an appointment that perhaps I wouldn't find a lot of comfort in, given the record of his government in that 1990 to 1995 era. However, it does enfold a balance on the board and it's important that a board of directors have a suitable balance across its membership so that the interests of all the people of Ontario are represented in the decisions that are taken by that board.

Further, the objectives of the bill would be to impose restrictions on Hydro One's compensation for the termination and resignation of designated officers. I think that perhaps is one of the key objectives of this bill, because that's what the people of Ontario really expect to have happen. I think they were enraged by the compensation packages that took place under Hydro One. Having this clause in the bill will tend to mollify the people of Ontario and give them some confidence that these kinds of things are not going to be tolerated or allowed by their government of whatever stripe.

The bill requires negotiation of new compensation packages for designated officers of Hydro One and nullifies existing contract provisions in excess of this act.

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Obviously those clauses have to be in this bill in order to make sure the people of Ontario and their best interests, their hard-earned dollars and the dollars they will pay in the future for the transmission of electricity throughout this province are protected so we can remain competitive in the North American power grid. That competitiveness is very important. If you're not competitive in the electrical industry—that is one of the first things that companies that are considering expanding or companies that are considering moving into Ontario would look at. They would look at the possibility of what the costs of—

Pager beeping.

Mr Chudleigh: That was my buzzer that went off. I'm supposed to make a phone call, but I'm not going to make the phone call.

That is one of the competitive factors that they would put in. If we don't have competitive electricity rates, we can't expect our private sector industries and our jobs to grow in the province the way that we want them to and the way that all Ontarians expect them to grow. It's actually through that growth that we are able to finance the kinds of increases in expenditures that we've seen in

health care in the last seven years or the kinds of increases in expenditures that we see in education and in those other areas that Ontarians feel so strongly about.

Another objective of the bill is to put in place a means to recover any excess amounts paid and prevent proceedings against the crown or others related to this act. It's important that the citizens of Ontario be protected from those excesses. Despite the resignation of the Hydro One board, this legislation is necessary to allow for the appointment of new directors and to protect the people of Ontario against excessive provisions in some current contracts of Hydro One executives.

We need to protect Ontario from the excesses of Ontario Hydro and Hydro One. That isn't just something that has happened over the last few months. I was a pretty young kid when I sat in the kitchen and listened to the 6 o'clock news or the 12 o'clock news when Gordon Sinclair was reporting on CFRB. I can remember that every once in a while Gordon Sinclair would get on his high horse and start ranting and raving over the airwaves about Ontario Hydro floating another bond issue. He would rail on that they had floated another bond issue without paying down one penny of their debt. In fact, over the entire history of Ontario Hydro, they never paid off one cent of their debt. They continued to finance the debt, to finance interest on that debt, with more and more borrowing until that borrowing reached a level of \$38 billion. It's untenable and it's unsustainable; however, that was the history of Ontario Hydro and its successor, Hydro One. So we have this \$38 billion, which Gordon Sinclair warned us about in the 1950s. He said, "You cannot continue to do this." Yet successive governments from that time on have allowed Ontario Hydro and its successor, Hydro One, to continue to pile up debt upon debt upon debt, never paying down one cent.

The proposed legislation also puts the people of Ontario first. The proposed legislation designates very strongly that the people of Ontario are the shareholders—through their government, but they are the shareholders—of Hydro One. As shareholders of a company you have certain rights, and those rights should be recognized by the board of directors and protected by the board of directors. This legislation lays that out clearly and strongly and allows the board of directors and the people of Ontario to have confidence that the future of this utility will be managed in a way that I believe Sir Adam Beck would have approved of.

Some interesting things have happened in the successor companies to Ontario Hydro—the power generators, for instance. We've seen, just about a month ago, I think, an announcement that the company running Bruce nuclear has announced that they had brought back one of the generators from being upgraded and repaired in a shorter time frame than they had initially suggested it would take, and they brought it back under budget. They spent less money bringing it back on line than they had expected to.

Just about two weeks later, there was an announcement out of the power-generating companies that the

Pickering generation plant had yet again another delay and it was going to cost them, again, more money than they had originally intended. I think that's a very good comparison—what happened at Bruce and what happened at Pickering—as to what happens in public utilities that have lost sight of their direction, have lost sight of the critical path, the road they're taking in trying to supply the people of Ontario with electricity, but they are not doing so in a way that is acceptable to the shareholders.

This proposed legislation merely exercises the usual rights of a shareholder—in this case, the government and the people of Ontario—to ensure that the board of directors will carry out the wishes of those people who not only use the majority of the power generated in Ontario but count on the transmission lines to carry that power from the source of generation to their homes, to their businesses, to the areas of the province that need this material.

It's interesting; it was many years ago that that grid was built. The grid supplied Ontario electricity. It was, I believe, in the 1930s that the program of rural electrification took place. I am very pleased and very proud that my grandfather was very much a part of that rural electrification program. It was that rural electrification program that allowed agriculture, allowed the barns and the farmhouses of agriculture in Ontario to experience growth, realize their potential as agricultural production units to get involved in the new technologies of the time, which were run by electricity—everything from an electric milking machine to electric grain grinders and those kinds of things that heretofore were not available on the farms because they didn't have electricity. But it was in the 1930s that that electricity went across the province in all the rural areas. It really revolutionized agriculture in those days and allowed agriculture in Ontario to become the breadbasket of Canada, really. We think of the prairies as being huge grain producers but Ontario's agriculture has always been, as far as gross farm receipts go, the major producer of agricultural products in this country.

Furthermore, the key to the proposed legislation is the direction to the new board to conduct a review of the remuneration and benefits of its officers. I think that's perhaps one of the most important parts of this legislation. If we don't learn from our mistakes of the past, how can we expect to go into the future? Knowing that the board of directors has the direction of its shareholders to review the compensation packages, to review what is necessary in order to attract some of the best management that we might have in the world to come and manage this massive organization, is very important.

This review will result in compensation packages that reflect both Hydro One's need to attract and retain talented executives—because it's a very competitive competition to retain those executives—and also the expectation of the people of Ontario for fair and reasonable compensation packages for those people.

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It's interesting that we read a lot about what private businesses compensate their people in order to attract the very best management that they might in some of these large companies. For instance, Microsoft, a very large technical company, has annual gross sales of something in the order of \$25 billion. Given that the Ontario government's budget for a given year is about \$62 billion—we'll know next Monday, I guess, what this current fiscal year is going to be—in those kinds of relative terms, with the Ontario government at \$60 billion-plus and Microsoft floating around \$25 billion—it puts those things in perspective. I think General Motors' annual sales worldwide are in the area of \$60 billion, and perhaps the member from Scarborough would correct me.

Hydro One doesn't really have total gross sales because it's a public utility. I know that it has a net income of something in the \$374-million package. It's not in the billions of dollars; it's in the millions. The compensation for Microsoft's chief executives is absolutely astronomical. I'm not sure what their salaries are. In Ontario's BusinessWeek there's an article about Steve Ballmer this month and it's interesting that his total compensation is primarily based on options on the shares of Microsoft that trade on the NASDAQ. If you take the options he gets and where that compensation might go—a few years ago in the halcyon days when the high-techs were increasing at ever-increasing rates, Mr. Ballmer probably made in excess of \$10 million a year, given his options and what they did in the private market. Today that situation is far different. When they haven't performed in the marketplace in the same way as they have in the past, their compensation falls drastically.

When we look at Hydro One and the compensation of those people who run this business for us as shareholders, the people of Ontario, as we look at what their compensation is, if they're doing very well, if they're paying down their debt, if they're managing very well, if they're maintaining the lines in a way which meets the long-term goals of the province, there should be compensation that reflects that. But when they are not paying down their debt, when they're not maintaining the lines—they tell us they need \$500 million to repair lines, to cut the undergrowth under the lines. Apparently they haven't been doing this for a while. They've been saving some money by not doing this, but now all of a sudden they need this kind of money to get their lines back in shape. They haven't been maintaining the engine that they have been designated to run. By not doing that, it would be my opinion that they have not been doing a very good job of managing this company and their compensation should reflect that. In the events of recent history we have seen that their compensation far outstripped the performance of their duties.

In the meantime, the proposed legislation protects the people of Ontario from what this government considers excessive provisions for termination or voluntary resignation of some key Hydro One officers. I think we're looking at the CEO of the organization, who got an extremely generous package.

I don't have a great deal of difficulty with Eleanor Clitheroe's compensation package. I suppose if I were the leader of a large company like that, I would go and ask for a compensation package similar to that. I find no fault with Eleanor in asking for those kinds of things. The fault lies—and I think the member from Thorold would agree with me—in the board of directors that granted it. It was a wonderful compensation package, and God bless her for asking for it. The fact that she was given the compensation package, that responsibility, rests squarely on the shoulders of the board of directors. They are the ones who should be upbraided for that rather generous offer for a public utility, not a corporation like Microsoft that is churning out tens of millions of dollars of profit; I think last year they cracked the billion-dollar profit mark. This public utility was not moving in those kinds of circles, so it's hard to imagine why the board of directors would have accepted those kinds of compensation packages for the top executives of Ontario Hydro. This act, this bill, this legislation, will provide those compensations are not repeated or are not concluded.

Also, the legislation sets out how any amounts paid out in excess of its provisions can be recovered and exercises the will of the people, through their government, to protect its rights through preventing proceedings resulting from the proposed bill. That's a long sentence, but I think what it says is that maybe the lawyers won't get too rich on this one. It limits the litigation that would be possible under this act, and in that way protects Ontarians, who are the shareholders of Hydro One, from being abused and getting ripped off in this particular regard.

The proposed legislation is a balanced effort to protect the rights of Ontario as Hydro One's shareholder and the people of Ontario with the needs of Hydro One's board to direct the corporation as an effective and efficient business enterprise. I think that's probably the key, to direct it as an efficient business enterprise. It's something that has been missing, because as we go back to the comments that Gordon Sinclair made in the 1950s and 1960s, this has not been an efficient business enterprise; it has not been something that Ontarians have been served well by. It is a huge corporation. It is one that has power grids that spread from Kenora to Cornwall, across this province, and it is one that is very, very important to Ontarians. We feel a kinship to it. There is probably nothing more Ontarian than Niagara Falls, and when Sir Adam Beck, who was abused when he tried to build Hydro One—there was a quote going around the other day, something about he's been misquoted, he's been lied about, he's been lied to, and now he's just going to hang around and see what happens after he started this wonderful project of building Niagara Falls into one of the world's great generators of electricity.

Hopefully, Mr Speaker, with the passing of this legislation and with the best parts of the heritage of Ontario Hydro, Hydro One will continue down the road to be a successful entity, to be a successful utility, one of which the people of Ontario can be proud, one with

which we will live to be pleased about the legislation that we're debating today.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Just to comment on the government members, I would say that the interesting thing that the government members refuse to explain is why all the details about salaries, about the workings of Hydro One or Ontario Power Generation, have been made explicitly exempt by this government's legislation. In other words, the public can't find out about the salaries, can't find out about the arrangements made for compensation, because this government passed an act making Hydro One matters exempt from freedom of information. They don't want the public to know that they were giving these outrageous salaries: \$172,000 for vacation pay, \$174,000 for Clitheroe's Aston Martin. They didn't want the public to know they were giving them this and they were pretending they didn't know about this compensation when they were appointing the directors they supposedly just fired.

1650

The buck stops at Premier Eves's desk. He was the Minister of Finance when he set up Hydro One and appointed the directors. He was there. Now he says, "I didn't know." I call this Bill 80 the we-didn't-know act. Nobody believes that.

As you know, David Olive's headline in today's Star reads, "Eves' Hydro One Comedy of Errors." It has been a comedy of errors, and the public all across the province and on Main Streets from Wawa to Windsor to Cornwall know that this is probably the most bungled project in recent Ontario history. Adam Beck is rolling over in his grave as he sees the bungling of one of our most significant assets, which he built, by the Eves government and his stooges, who basically do nothing but fiddle and squander while Hydro burns.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): In a way, I think the government has been enjoying the controversy over the obscene compensation for people who work at Hydro One, because they're hoping to distract the media and public attention away from the privatization agenda and have the focus completely on this compensation.

In fact, what happened here is that the government got caught. They were warned by my leader, Howard Hampton, about six months ago that this was happening and it was completely ignored. Then, when it became public as it did recently, when the horse was out of the barn and it became a huge public controversy, they brought in this act to try to fix it. But the horse is already out of the barn, and at the end of the day the bar has been raised so high on this, the salaries are so obscene and so high, that any level the new board comes back with is still going to be way too high for the public to accept and, I can assure you, for the New Democratic Party to accept.

I want to respond to the member for Scarborough East, who was talking about the alternative fuels committee which I sat on, and I did sign off on the report. He said that to his surprise, the NDP and the Liberals did support

all the recommendations from the government. I must correct the record on that. There was a spirit of co-operation on the committee but there were certain things withdrawn from the report, I think from all sides, that we couldn't agree on. There are still a few things in the report that I take issue with. I was very pleased to see the government agree to put energy efficiency and conservation in as one of the things to make recommendations on. That wasn't there at the beginning.

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): When I was back in my riding of Nipissing and listening to the individuals there, they were very supportive of our government's firing the board of directors of Hydro One. In fact, they thought that was a great idea. They were outraged at the level of compensation, as well as I. That was a tremendous amount of money. It's a waste of taxpayers' money, in my opinion.

What they expressed to me very strongly was why the opposition wouldn't support this bill. This government here is known as trying to protect the taxpayers of Ontario, and it was trying to put a bill through to say, "Hey, we think it's outrageous too. Let's put a stop to this," and we couldn't even get the support of the Liberals on it. That was the biggest comment I was hearing throughout places like North Bay, Mattawa, Powassan and Callander. They were shocked that the whole House wouldn't just unanimously agree, "Yes, let's clear out this group and put out another group that may be a little bit more fiscally responsible in running Ontario Hydro."

Personally, when I looked at it, I was kind of shocked that the Liberals would take a stance that they thought this bill wasn't worth supporting and they weren't going to support it, which really surprised me in the sense that all you're hearing about is how badly Ontario Hydro is being run and here they are not supporting what I thought was a very important bill to take steps to bring Ontario Hydro around to where it should be. I guess to the people of Nipissing I will say that I will continue to support this bill that replaces the board of directors.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My perspective on this bill is that it is here because of the very good work of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, the member for Ottawa South, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and the member from St Paul's. These are the gentlemen who, on the floor of this Legislature, exposed the inability of the Tory government to manage its own affairs.

The Tory government appointed the last board that was there. It strikes me as very strange that they appoint a board and then they're absolutely surprised when it comes to light that there are totally exorbitant and inappropriate salaries being paid to the chief executive officers of Hydro One. If you were to believe that, then I would suggest that they created the climate that might even enable that kind of notion to even happen because they introduced legislation that allowed a cloak of secrecy around Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation. So they created the monster that they now have been

forced to introduce legislation to put an end to. They introduced the legislation that prevented the main shareholders in this company, the people of Ontario, from having access to that information—what the compensation packages were for.

The other part of this legislation with which we have some significant difficulty is the fact that there is not a component in here that describes what kind of formal review the newly appointed board will undergo, so how do we know it may not happen again?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Responses?

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you for the comments from the members opposite, particularly the supportive comments about the good work done by the select committee on alternative fuel sources.

An awful lot has been said in this chamber and outside about who knew what, when and where. I don't know how many of the members opposite have actually read the Hydro One prospectus. I would encourage you to do that. If you did that, you would find right on the very front page that the issue date is March 28. I would remind everyone in here and outside that Mr Eves became the Premier on March 23. I would think, never having filled that office, nor has anyone else in this chamber, that there are probably a few things on your list of things to do when you become Premier of the province of Ontario. I would think that when taking over a \$64-billion-a-year enterprise, you have a few briefing notes to get caught up on, a few operational details—the small matter of hiring all your staff, getting the team in, getting everyone up to speed. You might not have a chance, even on the day that something like the Hydro One prospectus comes out, to read through this massive tome and to see on pages 77, 78 and 79 details about the compensation package and the outrageous severance offers and the outrageous benefits that were offered in there.

So the members opposite, who obviously believe that they've got some insider's scoop here about when people knew certain things, are suggesting that somehow Hydro One broke the securities regulations and gave advance notice to certain people about what was in their prospectus, even though the whole world didn't find out until March 28.

The bill is necessary. We've got to fix the problem. We're on the side of the ratepayers. Get off the fence and join us in protecting taxpayers and ratepayers.

1700

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to say I'm sharing my time with the members from St Catharines and York West.

I'd just comment on the last point by the member for Scarborough East. He makes a very interesting point, and it's one I'll talk about at length later in my remarks. But he points out that the prospectus went out March 28 and Mr Eves became Premier-elect or Premier-designate March 23. I'll just remind the people of Ontario about this: Mr Eves today in the media said, "Oh, I had reservations about this. I didn't think it was right. I thought

maybe we were making a major mistake sending this out at the same time as the market opened." Well, why didn't he do something about that? Mr Eves, without a question of a doubt, was asked before that went out on March 28, "Are you comfortable with this, new Premier?" That has to be the way it was. There would be no way that Mr Eves, becoming Premier-designate on March 23, did not put his stamp of approval on that initial public offering that the member from Scarborough says went out March 28. Mr Eves is now obviously trying to distance himself, saying, "Well, I had all these reservations." If he had the reservations, he owed it to the people of Ontario to say, "Hold it. Stop right there. Don't put it out."

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: The minister may choose to barrack, but this is a very important issue.

Mr Eves is trying to say, "Well, I had all these reservations, but Mr Harris did it." Mr Eves gave the approval for that initial public offering to go out March 28, and if he had reservations, he should have—any kind of leader would have said, "Stop it. Mr Lindsay, don't send that out. You do not have my approval for that. I want more time to think about that." But no; he said, "Let it go." And now it has cost the province of Ontario, believe me, millions and millions and millions of dollars. It has cost Ontario Hydro tens of millions of dollars.

The Minister of Energy is coming in. I'm very pleased he's here.

So I'll get to that issue later, but there's absolutely no question that Mr Eves said, "Go ahead with the initial public offering," on March 28, and away it went and now we're into this mess.

On the salary issue, I make this charge: I believe the government of Ontario knew every step of the way about these salaries. The member from Nipissing says, "Why haven't we passed this bill already?" I think the residents of Nipissing deserve to understand how this worked.

First, it was Mr Eves, the then-Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance, along with the rest of the cabinet, who drafted and put together the legislation that set up Hydro One. "We're going to set this up on a businesslike basis. Trust us. We know what we're doing." And so on April 1, 1999, the government set up Hydro One exactly like they wanted to. This was going to be businesslike: "Trust us. We know how to run these businesses." That's the first thing. Hydro One was set up just exactly as they wanted. "We know how to run these businesses."

Secondly, the government, with again, I say, Mr Eves at the time Minister of Finance, Deputy Premier—nothing happened without his approval—hand-picked every single member of that board. Every single member. This wasn't some rogue board that they inherited from some other government. I remember the government bragging about, "We've finally got a board here that's businesslike. We've scoured," not just the province. The chair of Hydro One, Sir Graham Day: international experience. They bragged about that. So now they've got the company set up exactly like they want it to be, a hand-picked board that can reflect our businesslike

attitudes. I can only assume the government made absolutely sure that this board was going to act in the interests of the taxpayers of Ontario in the direction they were given.

Mr Wilson, who until April was the minister responsible, brags about how frequently he met with the board. He suggests on at least one of the two boards, on OPG, "Well, I met weekly with them," and he brags about the influence that he had with the board. So I conclude that Mr Wilson, acting on behalf of the people of Ontario, was deeply involved with the board. As I say, he brags about it. On one occasion, he said—this was when he was talking about OPG, the other board—"I meet with Mr Farlinger and Mr Osborne every week at a set time, as did my predecessor Norm Sterling, as did my predecessor Brenda Elliott." He goes on to say about the other parties, "Oh, I meet with Mr Farlinger, as has been the tradition of all parties—or at least you guys should have met with them when you were in office."

So I say to the people of Nipissing and to the people of Ontario, Mr Wilson says he was meeting on a weekly basis with these boards and nothing was happening without his stamp of approval. I'd go further: as the shareholders, the people of Ontario each year have to approve the plans of Ontario Hydro. So someone has to act on behalf of the shareholders and approve those plans.

When all of this hit the public, Mr Wilson did say, "Oh, I tried to tell the board not to do this, but they wouldn't listen to me. In fact, every time I talked to them, they made it worse." Well, I say to the people of Ontario, if that is what actually happened, I want to see the letters he wrote on behalf of the taxpayers telling the board, "That's unacceptable." We've requested this from the Minister of Energy several times and have yet to see a single letter that Mr Wilson wrote to the Hydro One board saying, "I find your actions unacceptable."

The reason for this, I say to the people of Nipissing and the rest of the people of Ontario, is I hold the government responsible. The board, in my opinion, believed they were acting exactly as the government wanted them to act. I can't blame them. Mr Eves left here for a year's sabbatical. I believe his salary was at least \$1 million with one company and maybe \$250,000 with another. This was the kind of money I'm sure the board felt was acceptable.

This was first raised in the Legislature on May 15. The Minister of Energy, who is here with us—and I'm pleased he is—has said that when he was first briefed on this matter in April, he was outraged—outraged.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I didn't say I was outraged.

Mr Phillips: You did say "outraged," actually. You were outraged. It's a matter of record that he said he was outraged.

That was in April. When we raised this on May 15 in the Legislature, you would expect that if the minister was outraged about the salaries when we raised it—and it was

raised talking specifically about how she would receive a cash payment of \$6 million to \$7 million and pensions. We asked the Premier. He referred it to the Minister of Energy. The Minister of Energy never once, in his answer, referred to the salaries. He never said, "Oh, I'm glad you raised that. In April, I saw that and I was outraged." He said nothing on May 15, not a word, and Hansard will show that. So the opposition raised the \$6-million salary, the pensions and the fringe benefits. You would have thought Mr Stockwell—who said he had been briefed and as soon as he saw this in April was outraged—would have raised that with us on May 15. Silence. Nothing was said—nothing.

The next day we raised it again in the Legislature to the Premier. The Premier said nothing about being outraged. He said, "I'm having the minister look into it." I would have thought if the minister was outraged when he was briefed in April—and by the way, he indicated that he'd already told the Premier before question period. I believe he said that two or three days before we raised it in the Legislature, he had raised this matter with the Premier. Well, I'll say to the people of Ontario, if the government was so outraged by these salaries in April, when we raised it on May 15—the minister's looking it up right now in Hansard, and I'm pleased about that—I would have expected he would have got up to outline how outraged he was about the salaries. In fact, he changed the subject. He said, "We are going to be voting on legislation to set up the bill and whatnot." He never mentioned the salaries. The next day, when we asked the Premier—although the Minister of Energy has said, "I briefed the Premier on this two or three days before it was raised in the Legislature"—he never mentioned he was outraged. So I say to the people of Ontario, if Mr Wilson was so outraged by this, show me this evidence. Show me one letter that he wrote to the Hydro board, show me one piece of evidence that he indicated his intense dissatisfaction.

1710

If the current Minister of Energy, who was appointed in mid-April, was so outraged in mid-April, show me the evidence that you immediately let the board know that you were outraged by it. Show me that evidence. Show me a piece of evidence. The first correspondence to the board that we're aware of is dated May 30, two weeks after we raised it here in the Legislature, six weeks after the current minister said he was outraged, and months if not years after the previous minister said he was outraged.

So I say to the people of Ontario, how did this happen? How did the board get to the position where they're offering these kinds of, frankly, outrageous settlements, salaries and fringe benefits? How did we get to that position? I say that the evidence is that the board assumed they were acting with the support of the shareholders, represented by the government. If that is not the case, I raise again what we asked a week ago today. We said to the current Minister of Energy, "Show us the evidence. Show us where Minister Wilson sent a

letter to the board telling them, 'We find this unacceptable.'" Show me the evidence, current minister, who said he was briefed in April and was outraged by all of this, of what you did. When this was raised in the House on May 15, not a word. He's furiously looking through Hansard. He will not find a word about being outraged by the salaries.

So I say to the member from Nipissing, who asked why we wanted a debate on the bill, it is because of this. In our opinion, the clear evidence supports the fact that the board felt that every step of the way they were working hand in glove with the minister—the minister, who, after the fact, after the public were aware of this deal, then the outrage came, and then Mr Wilson, who never, ever sent a letter to the board. The evidence will say that as soon as the Minister of Energy was briefed in April, he was outraged by that.

Believe me, and the public can check this, on May 15, when it was raised here in the Legislature, not a word, not a single peep out of him. The minister said, "I informed the Premier about this outrage before it was raised in the Legislature." The Premier, as a matter of fact, was barely aware of it at all and implied that we were wrong in the numbers we were using.

The first letter, communication to the board that we have seen—and I challenge the Minister of Energy who is here now: if you have more recent correspondence than May 30, send it to us. Send us the letters when Mr Wilson informed the board that he was finding these salaries unacceptable. Give us the evidence when you were briefed in April that this outrage was translated into some action.

I say to the people of Ontario, if it had not come out publicly—and by the way, it's increasingly difficult to get anything out of the government because we are banned under what's called freedom of information from finding out much of what the public should be entitled to. This was as a result primarily of the fact that they had to file a prospectus with the securities commission. Even there, there is limited information.

I repeat my challenge, and the public of Ontario should be aware of this. You're being told, "As soon as he found about it, Mr Eves took action. The government was caught by surprise and was outraged by it all." Well, I say this: Mr Wilson, acting on behalf of the people of Ontario, informs us that he was meeting on a weekly basis and that he grew—he called it "abhorrent." If in fact he felt that way at the time, I want to see what he did about it. I want to see the evidence that he did something about it. The current Minister of Energy, Mr Stockwell, in his briefing said that as soon as he saw it he was outraged by these salaries. I want to see the evidence of what you did.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No. Gerry, stop saying that.

Mr Phillips: You see, he's trying to use some revisionist history: "I wasn't outraged until they made a change." They made one minor change—one minor change. When we raised it here, her salary for severance was \$6 million, her pension was \$1 million a year, the car

was \$175,000 and the holiday \$172,000. Mr Stockwell said, "Oh, when I first saw that, I was outraged." He did nothing. Nothing. When we raised it here in the Legislature, he would not even answer the question.

So I say to the people of Ontario, why does all this matter? The board is gone. In my opinion, these salaries and the fringe benefits were totally unacceptable. That's why we raised it. The board, unfortunately, can't sue the government. The board will never get a public airing to say, "Listen, we thought we were operating consistently with what the government wanted." This bill prohibits that. This bill shuts them up. They're gone; they can't sue; they're out of here. Why is that? Just to make absolutely sure they can't ever tell their story publicly.

Frankly, these people are well-respected individuals. When they were appointed by the government, they bragged about it. They said, "These are well-respected business people." I just say to the current Minister of Energy that I hold you, Ernie Eves and Jim Wilson accountable. Every step of the way the board had your agreement. I challenge you again, I say to the public: listen, this outrage is manufactured. They knew it was happening, and it was only when the public got justifiably outraged that they finally, on May 30, sent off a letter to the board. I challenge the minister to show me Jim Wilson's letters, evidence that Jim Wilson did a thing about it, evidence that you did a thing about it in April, evidence that you were outraged by it. I await that. I've asked. It was just a week ago here that we requested that once again. Nothing—we've heard nothing from them.

As I say, we'll never hear from the board. They will never get a chance to tell their story. Some of them have said to the media, "Listen, we simply assumed we were doing what this government wanted." I repeat, I can understand that. Mr Farlinger is a well-regarded individual; Ms Hutton is a senior person at Hydro One and is very close to the government, obviously. Some of their closest advisors are very close to the government. They assumed they had the pulse of the government. In their weekly meetings with the Minister of Energy they must have assumed they were heading in their direction. Again I say to the people of Ontario, if the government informed the board before May 30, 2002, that they were heading in the wrong direction, I want to see that. So far, nothing. Nothing.

The other matter I wanted to touch on briefly with this bill is that the board is essentially also taking the fall for this fiasco on the initial public offering. Where did the initial public offering come from? We will not find out. Where did that idea come from? Was it the board of Ontario Hydro that thought we should do this? Was it Mike Harris? Who thought this up? It came out of the blue. In my opinion, it was because the government wanted some money to balance their books. They sold the 407 before the last election; they're going to sell Hydro One before this election.

The Premier is saying, "Listen, if I had my druthers, I wouldn't be putting the IPO out at the time the market

opened," and the market opened May 1. Well, he did have his druthers. The initial public offering went out March 28, 2002. Mr Eves became Premier-designate March 23.

1720

I guarantee you, because this was going to be the largest public offering in the history of Canada, the first issue for the new Premier would have been, "Premier, we're ready to put out this initial public offering. It's scheduled to go out March 28. We want to make absolutely sure you're on side, because you're going to have to live with this." He had to put his stamp of approval on that and we hear today in the media that no, he had these reservations.

I say two things to the business community. One is that the board's taken the fall. The board, in my opinion, thought they knew exactly what the government wanted to do. I think the government was wrong and the board was wrong. They were both wrong and they're both responsible.

The initial public offering went out on March 28. Mr Eves was briefed March 25 and there is no way that went out without his approval—no way. He had to say, "Let it go." I realize that he's trying to distance himself, saying, "I think it was a mistake," and whatnot. But timing permitted him to say, "Whoa. I'm feeling very uneasy about this."

Recognize that this is supposed to be Mr Eves's area of expertise. He was off for a year. This is the sort of thing he did with the international bank he went to. He was the expert on this. If he was feeling uneasy about it, feeling it was a mistake to open the market and to go with the IPO, he had an obligation, a responsibility, to say to Mr Lindsay from SuperBuild, who I gather was in charge of this, "Whoa. I am feeling uneasy. There is no rush on this. Let's hold off on that." In fact, he had the perfect opportunity. It didn't come as a surprise. He spent three months on the campaign trail debating this issue. He must have had a firm opinion on it. It was what he'd done for a year in the private sector. Several of his campaign team were experts on it. There can be no way that he didn't have a clear idea of what was going to happen.

Now we're having this revisionist kind of history, because frankly this thing has become a financial fiasco. It truly is an embarrassment that the IPO was put out. First, the courts rejected it, but equally important, Mr Eves, who now says, "Oh, I had these major reservations," had the perfect opportunity to put his hand up and say, "Whoa. You want this to go out, but no, I want some more time on it." In my opinion, something this absolutely fundamental could not have caught him by surprise. That year in the private sector was what this was all about.

Today, we have him trying to distance himself from those salaries. Again, I go back. He was the number two guy. Nothing happened without his approval: the legislation set up to make this a more business-like approach, set up exactly like the government wanted to; the board

hand-picked; and Mr Wilson, then Minister of Energy, bragging about how he, just on an absolutely regular basis, stayed right in touch. And yet no evidence—not one piece of evidence—that the government said, “Listen, these salaries are getting out of line.”

Then the outrage we found that Mr Stockwell had in April, that as soon as he saw this he was outraged. I want to see any evidence that he did anything at all about that. I would suggest people read Hansard from May 15, 2002, when this issue was first raised in the Legislature—not a peep by the government about these being outrageous. We outlined the details to them.

The new member for Nipissing says, “Why don’t you just pass this bill?” I think the public has a right to know that the board did not act alone. This wasn’t some rogue board that the government inherited from some other party’s government. This was their own hand-picked board. So the board will take the fall. They’re going to be shut up by the legislation. They have no recourse to litigation. But the evidence to me is crystal clear: step by step, they just assumed that everything they were doing had the support of the shareholder, the government. As a matter of fact, I think you’ll find a voting record. The shareholders have to vote, at least annually.

Here we are: an incredible mess, egg on Ontario’s face, without a question of a doubt. The business community is laughing at us. In this international marketplace, where our fiscal credibility is so important, where we’re trying to build credibility in the financial community, we look foolish, to say the least.

I’m not sure what we’re going to do with Hydro One. We’re going to leave it out of the private sector. Then we’re going to have an IPO. Then we settled the IPO and we don’t have the legislative authority for it. We then back off. There’s no direction, and the Premier is now saying, “Listen, I didn’t want to do this in the first place.” The member for Scarborough East made the point for me. The prospectus is dated March 28, five days after Mr Eves became Premier-designate. This would have been cleared with him. He would have had to put his stamp of approval on it, and if he felt uneasy about it, that’s when I think he would have said, “Don’t do it.” But he had to say “Go ahead.”

The bill will pass shortly. As I say, the board is gone. But I hold, without a question of a doubt, the government accountable and responsible. I’m pleased to turn the floor over to the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I was just conversing with the member for Niagara Centre, who agrees with me, I’m sure, that the government knew all along what these salaries were because they appointed the board, and just when the heat came on the government, they decided to change their minds and became outraged.

I was looking for that outrage a couple of years ago when they were setting up Hydro One in the first place. The member for Niagara Centre and I on that occasion were worrying about the salary structure we would see, because these people run with the rather wealthy crowd.

Not you, Mr Speaker. You’re a neutral, independent individual, but you would know, I think, as you happen to know some of the folks on the other side, it’s a pretty highbrow crowd—well, not highbrow—a highfalutin crowd, we’ll call it, that has plenty of money, and they run with them. You don’t. You’re still down to earth and interested in the average person. I know that.

I can’t believe that the Premier of this province, the Honourable Ernie Eves, was not aware of this package when he became the Premier. As my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt has so ably outlined, the government was well aware of what was happening at Hydro One. I happen to subscribe to the view that he does, that the reason for wanting to sell Hydro One—other than the fact that the members who sit on the other side tend to be very ideological these days, rather right wing, and don’t like anything that’s in the public sector—one of the desperation reasons was the government wanted to have a balanced budget. When it appeared last fall that revenues would be down considerably because of an impending recession, partially caused by the incident that happened in New York City and Washington on September 11, they felt they wouldn’t have sufficient money to show a balanced budget. So they wanted to get into a fire sale.

You will recall, Mr Speaker, very well, as a member of this Legislature, that this government before the last election sold Highway 407 for a virtual song. The reason they sold it for a song was that they needed the money to balance the budget. I think they sold it for—what?—\$3 billion, and the valuation was \$10 billion.

I truly believe that when I’m trying to make this point there should be sufficient government members here to be able to hear it. Therefore, I ask you whether or not we have a quorum in the House.

1730

The Speaker: Is a quorum present?

Acting Clerk at the Table (Ms Anne Stokes): A quorum is not present.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Speaker: A quorum is present. The member for St Catharines has the floor.

Mr Bradley: Thank you. I was glad I was able to secure the presence, at least momentarily, of the Minister of Environment and Energy, government House leader and chief political adviser to the cabinet, who is obviously very overburdened with the present responsibilities he has. Perhaps that will allow me to get into that specific issue.

I found it difficult to believe that the Minister of Environment and Energy was able to keep on top of this issue. The reason I say that is because the Premier has landed very onerous responsibilities on his desk. First, as government House leader—people know that requires his presence in the House from time to time and at special meetings to deal with legislative matters. Second, it is of course necessary for him to deal with the quagmire that is Ontario Hydro or the successors to Ontario Hydro, and that has preoccupied his time. Third, he has to be the Minister of Environment.

It would be my view that one of the reasons we have the situation with water-testing laboratories in this province is because the member has been preoccupied with the legislation we have here and has not had sufficient time to deal with matters related to the Ministry of Environment.

I can see the bags developing under his eyes from his long hours of work. They're not there from reading his briefing books; I know that. But they might well be there from his long hours of awakening out there. I'm sympathetic to his—

Mr Kormos: Wine stains are such devilish things to read through.

Mr Bradley: That they are. I'm even wondering—this may be unfair, and somebody will tell me if it's unfair to say this—if somebody in the Ministry of Environment told him something about these labs and he was just busy with something else at the time, perhaps this bill that has come before the House, and forgot he was told about this. I don't know that, but it's plausible. It's very plausible. He'll come into the House to defend himself against that.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): You might know. You were there.

Mr Bradley: Well, I know exactly what it's like when you have a lot of things on your plate. The former Minister of Environment, Ms Elliott, is here. She knows what it's like in that ministry: how complicated it is and how onerous a responsibility it is.

So it might well be that somewhere along the line somebody gave a memo to the minister and he didn't have a chance to read it that day because he was preoccupied with Hydro One and OPG. That's a plausible thought. Maybe that's not the case, but it's a plausible thought for members of this House to entertain.

Mr Kormos: How about this: we know he has late nights; does he have early mornings, though?

Mr Bradley: Well, I cannot comment on that. It used to be alleged that the now Premier did not rise early in the morning. I never believed that, of course, although I was assured one day, when we were in an all-night session of the Legislature, by a person who used to sit in this chair who will remain nameless, that I didn't have to worry. I was worried that I'd have to be here bright and early and we were sitting all night. The person who was sitting in that chair at the time said, "Oh, you don't have to worry about that because 11:15 will probably do, to get in the next day." I don't know whom he was making reference to, and that's probably not a trail I should go down at this time.

I, like the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, really believe that with the Honourable Jim Wilson, who was then Minister of Energy, meeting so often with the board of Hydro One and the board of OPG, the government was fully aware of what was going on, in fact was giving advice to OPG's board and to Hydro One's board. All of this manufactured outrage that we see now at the compensation package—that's both the salaries and the severance potential, the pensions and so on—came only after the opposition raised this matter in the House and it

became very public and the telephone calls started to come in to the Conservative members' offices about this matter. Then they decided that they were going to be outraged.

The crowd that sits on the other side by and large—there are probably exceptions—believe in this stuff, that there should be very rich people getting a lot of money in the corporate sector; they always have, and I'll say they've been consistent in that. So why would they be suddenly surprised when they saw the kind of salary and compensation package that was forthcoming for the board of Hydro One? That's why I call it manufactured outrage.

Clearly, the people of this province did not want Hydro One sold. I think the government was intent on doing it; the Premier was vacillating. I didn't know if he was going to sell it. One day he had six options on the table; he started out with one option. The day of the byelection that the Premier was involved in, you will remember the big headline in the Toronto Star, which they always criticize: "It's Off the Table." Now, the member for Nipissing would tell me perhaps that made a 19-vote, 20-vote difference in that riding. Who knows whether it did or not? But certainly that was an impression that he tried to create.

There's a justified worry among those of us in the opposition that today the Premier really doesn't mean it, that while he says he wants to retain 51% after the battering that the government has taken over the issue of Hydro One privatization, in reality if he could get past another election we would see the rest of Hydro One sold. That would be similar to selling all the highways in Ontario—I've been saying the 400-series highways, the four-lane highways, but all the highways in the province, because that's what the transmission grid in essence is.

It was interesting to see—you may have noted this with telephone calls to your office, Mr Speaker—that many of the people who phoned were actually long-time Conservatives, many seniors who were quite concerned, and I was getting the calls from these people who were Conservatives, so I know the Conservative members of the Legislature were getting those calls. Now we've seen the government is down to 51%. Who knows where they'll be when it's all over.

I want to say as well, when I look down the list of the original board members, they're a who's who of Torydom and they are friends of this government. They are people who would be more at home in the Albany Club than they would be in the Optimist Club or the Lions Club. They were people very close to this government. We've got a few political appointments that have come in now, because the government wants to look good, so you always pick the good friend of the member for Niagara Centre, the Honourable Robert Rae. He was a strong supporter of his years ago, and my colleague Murray Elston was put on the board, because you've got to have a Liberal there and a Conservative there, so if anybody complains you simply point across and say, "Well, what about this person or that person?"

Mr Kormos: We know who the Liberal is. Are you suggesting Murray is a Conservative?

1740

Mr Bradley: The board is still stacked. The member for Niagara Centre may suggest that when they appointed Bob Rae and Murray Elston they appointed two Liberals, but I don't want to mischaracterize his affection for his former leader, who was so good to him.

I want to say that finally we're getting a decision with which I think we can agree.

What was interesting to watch—and my colleagues who are next will tell me when I'm supposed to sit down—was the government House leader. The government House leader would get up in the House and say he wanted immediate second and third reading of this bill. Well, all he had to do was call the bill. We rarely have second and third reading of a bill on the same day, particularly a bill of this significance, but that was the hammer he tried to use. He got up in the House to divert attention from his own troubles.

One thing I must say the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Energy and the government House leader all combined into one has is the ability to divert attention. His bluster and bluff that we see in the House are something to behold. It entertains his own members. I see him look up to the press gallery for approval from some people up there. I don't know if he gets it or not, but he certainly gets it from his own members. And I frankly find it entertaining to see him at least try to put a smile on the faces of the government members because, heaven knows, their faces have been long over the past few weeks with all of the problems besetting this government and their ability to try to do a 180-degree turn philosophically since the former member for Nipissing departed this House. I should say he's departed this House but he's close by. Just in case you were worried that he's gone, he has an office in the Whitney Block—I'm told it's a newly renovated office in the Whitney Block—where he can advise the government. His long shadow can still be not far from his very best friend, the Honourable Ernie Eves, Premier of Ontario.

But we all remember, as you remember, Mr Speaker, because you were sometimes a dissident in certain matters, as I recall, that it was the Honourable Ernie Eves—if I may use his name in a common way, as we do, rather than “the member for” any particular riding, because he's a good friend of many of us on this side—who was the finance minister while all the slashing and burning went on and while a lot of the shenanigans at Hydro were starting up.

I think I have to yield the floor at some time.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Oh, he says about eight minutes. I'm glad to see that.

I'm worried about this. Maybe the member for Niagara Centre can help me with this, or perhaps somebody else who is a lawyer in this House. I don't know how they can get away with passing a bill that won't precipitate some legal proceedings by the people affected

by this bill. Maybe a lawyer, a person learned in the law from Niagara Centre or elsewhere, would be able to say to me, “Look, folks, this is still going to precipitate some legal proceedings.” I'm worried that there could be yet another protracted legal dispute going on between the government and in this case the deposed board of directors of Hydro One. They're not actually deposed, because of course they resigned their positions when it appeared they were going to be fired by this particular government. I anticipate, as a non-lawyer, that we're going to see some considerable legal action against this government and that those folks who are being deposed or those whose salaries and compensation packages are being cut back will reclaim some of that through legal proceedings in which they will be engaged.

Again, I want to describe this as a genuine problem for the government and my good friend the Minister of Environment and Energy, and I think all this distraction has taken him away from his attention to the Ministry of the Environment. I asked him one day if I could take him on a tour of the Ministry of the Environment—I don't think he had been in the building at that point in time; it's 135 St Clair Avenue West, by the way, in case he's wondering—and if he would acquaint himself with that. Now, is that because he's not interested? Of course not. It's because Premier Eves has dumped on him such onerous responsibilities.

That's why I think we're in the mess we're in with water testing in this province. I heard him say today, “Well, I only got the report from Justice O'Connor”—that was a good report, by the way—“a couple of weeks ago. Did you expect me to act on it immediately?” I was pointing out to members of the news media and to members of this House that in fact a year ago a company called Fine Analysis, which is close to your riding—it's in Hamilton—had been investigated and eventually charged by the Ministry of the Environment for manipulating its tests: not doing certain tests and manipulating the results of tests. That was the charge against this company. There had been a long investigation. I know the member for Hamilton East wrote a letter to the minister at the time. Both of us were saying, “Look, you should conduct an audit of all the labs in Ontario.”

You've got to figure this out: if MDS laboratories, which is probably the largest—somebody can correct me—laboratory in this province, which has done a lot of work over the years and has a reputation in this province, was having trouble with the testing, if it wasn't testing as it was supposed to for E coli, which was responsible for killing people in Walkerton and making thousands ill, if they were not testing for it and not providing information in a timely fashion, imagine what might happen with other laboratories that have fewer resources. So it's important to go and look.

When you go out and look you might find there was not a problem in some of those. I know my friend from Etobicoke North is afraid that there's a broad brush there. I wouldn't mean to do that at all. What I want to say is, you assure the people of this province if you do the checking.

After the fact—because it's policy on the fly, just as this bill is policy on the fly—by the time the minister left the House here, made his way through the back lobby and got out there, he was already sending people out to investigate laboratories. That's the first I heard he was sending anybody out, because when he was in the House answering, he said, "That's not our job. It's the standards council's job, somebody else's job. It's not our job." But by the time he got through the back alley and out into the scrum where he was under intense pressure, he said, "We're phoning the people now and telling them we're coming."

That's not a very good thing to do, either. If you phone somebody and say that you're going to arrive, chances are everything's going to be in place by the time you arrive. It's better to make a surprise visit, take split samples if possible, take a careful look at what's going on, and then make those judgments. So I think we would not have been into the other problem we had today if the minister was not preoccupied with backfilling, with that manufactured outrage, over this piece of legislation.

I want to ensure that others in the House get a chance to speak on this piece of legislation, so I'm going to yield the floor now to my colleague from York West.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I'll take the opportunity to add my few minutes to Bill 80. Bill 80 was introduced just a few days ago by the minister due to the pressure that was brought upon him, the minister himself and the government, of course, with the issue of the compensation salaries of the Hydro One board of directors, all successors and, of course, everything associated with hydro: Ontario Hydro, Hydro One, the sale and whatever. What Bill 80 really does is give the minister the power to let the members go. It deals with the compensation packages, their salaries and, of course, the power of the minister and the government to re-appoint new members.

The bill was introduced on June 4, 2002, I believe; just a few days ago. Immediately, on the spot, the minister said, "Well, if you're with us, if you really want to do something about it, let's get it approved now: first, second and third reading." The bill wasn't even introduced in the House and the minister said, "I want your support here, now."

I remember very well that the member for Windsor West said, "Give us five minutes to take a look at the bill and we'll give you that approval." We demanded five minutes' adjournment to take a look at the bill, Bill 80 here, to see what it contained. The government and the minister refused to allow the opposition in the House five minutes to review the contents of this bill, and now they have the gall to say to the public that we are opposed, that we don't want to deal with the issue. Give me a break.

1750

I hear the member from Scarborough East say, "We spent millions of dollars during the past two years explaining what we were doing with respect to hydro and Hydro One." Isn't this wonderful, that after they spent millions of dollars in the last couple of years, none of it

went to address the real issues? According to the member himself, if they had done a proper job and spent millions of dollars, we wouldn't be here today debating this particular issue.

The board members were appointed by the same government. Most of the board members used to work for members of the government. And now he has the gall to come into this House and say, "We've spent millions of dollars telling the public what we were going to do." It doesn't wash with us and it doesn't wash with the public.

Even today the public says, "What's IPO? What's OPG? What's this Hydro One? What are these corridors?" If they really had spent the money with the purpose of educating the public, they wouldn't be here today. I have to tell the minister, the Premier and the member from Scarborough East that if they had really wanted to explain what that entailed, they should have held public hearings a year ago, even before they announced it, or said, "This is what we want to do and this is what we are going to do. We are going to go to the public." They didn't do that; they gave us three or four days because the opposition and the public and the press crucified this government and the minister. They said, "You can't do that. You did it with the 407, and now we know where we are." God forbid they are going to do the same thing. The Hydro One outcry is 10 times bigger than on the 407.

It's quite interesting. The board members were appointed by the government. The government must have known the compensation packages and the salaries, because in the end they had to know, but they didn't do anything until the outcry became public. And it was their own doing. It started with the splitting up of Hydro One, on May 1 the generation, and then of course the on-again, off-again sale of Hydro One. That was their own doing. They brought this upon themselves, because time and time again they said, "Yes, we're going to sell it; no, we're not going to sell it." It was on the table, it was off the table, it was under the table, but they never told the public what they really wanted to do.

I have to say that even the present Premier says, "Having listened to the people of the province of Ontario, the government has now decided it is not going to part with the control of Hydro One." So the Premier told reporters. He didn't change his mind until we had the decision of the court back in April, but he was in favour all the time. Of course, he was seconding the idea of the former Premier, Mr Harris, and now he has changed his mind. Rightfully so—he has a right—and I believe by changing his mind he has done the right thing, because he has seen the light. This is too important just to go ahead and sell it.

Even so, if they did one thing right, it was to confuse the public. Even after yesterday's announcement, where the Premier said, "That's it. We're not going to part with it," he then kept on saying, "We still believe there are ways to bring private sector discipline into the corporation without parting with more than 50%." Oh, come on. Tell the people of Ontario what the heck you really want to do. Either you part with it or you don't part with it.

Then he adds more fuel: "Those three primary ways, of course, are a strategic partner of some sort; an income trust arrangement of some sort; or an IPO arrangement of some sort of less than 50% of the entity."

The possible sale of Hydro One, some \$5.5 billion in proceeds, would have helped to pay down the \$21 billion. We all know what happened to the sale of 407 and the money. How much did they pay off on the debt? Nothing. As a matter of fact, they went to borrow more money to make it even bigger, so no wonder there is this outrage. But I am pleased to say that at least they have listened to the opposition, they have listened to the public and they are doing something about it.

We were not opposed to saying, "Something has to be done about those truly exaggerated compensation packages, salaries, vacation pay and car allowances," and we are prepared to deal with that. We were asking the government, the minister, for simply five minutes to take a look at the bill. We said, "We would like to make one major amendment, and that is to open it up to the public, subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and greater legislative accountability." What's wrong with that? It's not in the act, and this is what the Liberals wanted. I'm sure that every Ontario taxpayer would like to have that kind of accountability, but the government, being the government, says, "No. Either you vote now, otherwise you will be against doing

something." We believe it's important that we correct the mistake the government made. It is important that we bring some accountability, on behalf of the government, to Ontario Hydro and all the successors.

I believe that the bill should be approved. The compensation should be well taken care of and we should be dealing in the proper fashion. We did say that we would like to see a great amount of accountability. We were looking for two things: a formal review for appropriate compensation for the public sector CEO of Hydro and OPG. The government said, "Uh, uh. We want the approval now," so that's why we are here today. At least now we have a little bit of debate. We can expose more of the mishandling by the government, if you will, of the total issue of Hydro One and of course the compensation packages.

I note that you and I were both looking at the clock, Mr Speaker. It's 6 o'clock, and you want to say that the time is gone and we should go.

I do thank you. I thank the House for the opportunity to address the issue, although briefly, and I hope we can see some changes and get on with Bill 80.

The Speaker: It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

*The House adjourned at 1758.
Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		

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Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
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Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)		
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

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Troisième session, 37^e législature

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 13 June 2002

Jeudi 13 juin 2002



Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 13 June 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WASTE DIVERSION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LE RÉACHEMINEMENT DES DÉCHETS

Mr Baird, on behalf of Mr Stockwell, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 90, An Act to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste / Projet de loi 90, Loi visant à promouvoir la réduction, la réutilisation et le recyclage des déchets.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Debate? The chief government whip.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I look around the House and I say to my good friend and colleague from the peninsula, if he has any comments he wants to send to me in writing over here based on the—

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): If I may, Speaker, I do have comments: I don't think there's a quorum.

The Speaker: Could the table check for quorum, please.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): Quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: Quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Speaker: The chief government whip.

Hon Mr Baird: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent that we amend the time allocation and that each party have 20 minutes to speak, without questions and comments, and the question be put after 60 minutes of debate, split equally between the three parties.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Baird: Had I moved the bill on third reading?

The Speaker: Yes, you did.

Hon Mr Baird: Great. I would indicate that I would be splitting my time, our caucus's 20 minutes of time, between myself, the member for Niagara Falls and the member for Brampton Centre. I look to the member for Peterborough and he will get those members in here for the vote.

It's my pleasure to speak on the occasion of the third reading of Bill 90, the Waste Diversion Act. It is clear that many of Ontario's affected stakeholders support the

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 13 juin 2002

measures in this bill. In fact, the standing committee on general government heard this many times during its two separate hearings on the bill. Stakeholders from industry, municipalities, non-governmental associations and the general public came forward with their support of the bill and with some good suggestions on how we, as legislators, could in fact make this bill better.

Municipalities will be key players in many of the waste diversion programs created under this act, especially the blue box program, which I think was an important invention, I would say to my colleague from St Catharines. He played a big part in that program. It's a way for ordinary consumers and citizens to participate in reducing waste. It is one of the three Rs, but not the most important of the three Rs; obviously we want to reduce and reuse before we recycle.

We listened carefully to the opinions and took their advice very seriously. AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, commended the minister for proposing what it called groundbreaking legislation. AMO commended the ministry for following through on its commitment to waste diversion in Ontario. In her most recent appearance before the standing committee, the president of AMO, Ann Mulvale, said, "This bill, as amended, is a solid framework based on common ground among key players."

I do think it is important that we work with municipalities on important issues like recycling and environmental initiatives. She made it abundantly clear that municipal governments want to take the path, as laid out in the bill, toward a sustainable waste diversion system in Ontario.

1850

It takes many experts with knowledge and practical experience to run waste diversion programs successfully. The Municipal Waste Integration Network and the Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators represent waste management experts from municipalities right across the province. They understand what the new resources made possible in this bill will mean to them and to their ongoing task of managing programs and diverting waste. Both organizations appeared twice before the committee, and on both occasions supported the bill and made suggestions that would help make this important piece of legislation even better. Both organizations' views are important, and I think they merit the attention of all of us collectively as members of this House.

The Recycling Council of Ontario, which represents a wide range of environmental interests, especially in the

field of waste diversion, has said the bill's passage is critical to the success of waste diversion programs in Ontario. In its second appearance before the standing committee, the council reiterated its support for the bill, calling it "vital legislation, which will call into action all stakeholders, including industry, to reduce and divert waste in the province of Ontario." I know that's of great personal interest to you, Mr Speaker, because I know you to be someone who cares deeply about the future of our environment.

The council has worked closely with my colleagues at the Ministry of the Environment and with stakeholders for many years. They continue to be a valuable partner in this initiative. The council has been instrumental in enhancing waste diversion in the province, and I want to say that members on all sides of the House certainly respect their advice.

I say to my colleague the member for Niagara Falls that I'm looking forward to hearing his speech very shortly on this important piece of legislation.

Many key industry sectors relevant to the types of waste for which the bill was designed support the bill. Business leaders know the bill helps them create a level playing field, something industry has consistently asked for. The business community wants to become engaged in solving the waste management challenges we all face, but on a fair and equitable basis.

We are pleased that the majority of submissions that came forward during the initial hearings through the standing committee on general government in November 2001 and just this past May supported the bill. Corporations Supporting Recycling, a key partner in this initiative whose membership includes many of the largest manufacturers, brand owners and distributors of food and consumer products in Ontario, appeared before the committee to enthusiastically support the bill. The CSR stated that it "will return Ontario to the forefront of recycling in Canada." They further stated, "This bill is a good solution that was built through a process of consultation and consensus and it is based on a shared responsibility model that sets the framework for economic and environmental sustainability."

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The CSR is dead.

Hon Mr Baird: I know my colleague and good friend the member for St Catharines liked the Common Sense Revolution and liked to see us always bring forward initiatives. As the two of them said, it's very much alive today and we move forward in the spirit of revolution in the province of Ontario.

It's funny that my colleagues opposite always talk about the Harris-Eves regime, and now they say the Common Sense Revolution is dead.

Mr Bradley: It depends on the hour.

Hon Mr Baird: My colleague from St Catharines says, "It depends on the hour."

The CSR also spoke on behalf of private sector industry associations such as the Canadian Manufacturers of Chemical Specialties Association, the Canadian Paint

and Coatings Association, the Canadian Council of Glycerine Distributors and the Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association.

These comments clearly indicate the level of broad support this legislative initiative has received. The government has listened to the good ideas that were suggested through the committee and through the Environmental Bill of Rights process, and we feel the bill has been strengthened even further by the amendments that have been made in committee.

Given that we in this caucus are sharing our time, I look forward to hearing the remarks of my honourable colleague the member for Niagara Falls, who will speak for about eight minutes.

Applause.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): To the member for St Catharines, thank you very much for that welcome as I rise today to speak to third reading of the Waste Diversion Act.

I also want to start my comments today by mentioning again that today we had a visit from former parliamentarians. We now have a former parliamentarians' organization, and many of the MPPs who have served in this House in the past were here today for a tour and to have some discussions on a variety of issues that affect them on a regular basis. It was good to see so many familiar faces. I know the member from St Catharines, who has been here for 25 very long years, was happy to see many of the people he served with over those 25 years.

I had the very distinct pleasure this morning of picking up on McMillan Drive Mr Vince Kerrio, who was the Liberal member for Niagara Falls from 1975 to 1990. Mr Kerrio and I drove up together this morning from about 7 o'clock and, with the traffic a little heavy, it took us probably until about 9 o'clock to get here. I get to see Mr Kerrio quite often and I very much enjoyed once again spending a couple of hours with him and talking to him about a variety of issues. He had some of his own interesting comments on the Hydro board that we recently named, the issues of Hydro and a variety of other things. So I very much enjoyed it and I look forward, if he'll maybe come up again for another meeting of former parliamentarians, to spending some more time with Mr Kerrio.

But I digress a little bit. It is my pleasure to speak tonight on third reading of Bill 90, the Waste Diversion Act. It's an important piece of legislation that promotes the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste by creating Waste Diversion Ontario or, as we call it, WDO. It's a permanent, arm's-length corporation to develop, implement and fund waste diversion programs in the province of Ontario.

I know in the Niagara area—and the members from St Catharines and Welland-Thorold also know this—we, like many areas around the province, are very concerned about what we do with waste. We recently had an issue in my riding of a landfill in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where we were going to truck garbage from around the region into that landfill. There were quite a few legitimate con-

cerns from the people of Niagara-on-the-Lake with that plan. I went with several members from the regional council and the mayor, Gary Burroughs, from Niagara-on-the-Lake. We went over to Niagara Falls, New York, to visit an incineration plant. Incineration was something that many years ago the NDP kind of outlawed in Ontario. They thought it had very many detrimental effects and that there shouldn't be incinerators allowed. But the technology has changed quite a bit and we have changed regulations in the past to again allow it, although it would be the type of incineration that is among the best in the world and ensuring that the pollutants that came out of that incineration process would be negligible.

I think there is quickly coming a day—you see quite often the debate between the city of Toronto and Kirkland Lake, the issue of whether the garbage should be trucked up there, which a lot of people in Kirkland Lake actually want as an industry for them. But people in the city of Toronto didn't want to do that and they looked at alternative forms of dealing with that garbage other than just landfill. However, everyone knows and everyone around the province agrees that the more we can reduce, reuse and recycle materials, the less we're either going to need landfill sites or to move forward on other forms of dealing with garbage like incineration. This bill aims to support that.

Among other things, Bill 90 reaffirms our government's commitment to the blue box program and to ensuring that municipalities have the tools they need to deliver waste diversion services. By passing this bill, Ontario will be put on track to exceed—exceed—its 50% waste reduction goal. It will provide for continuing growth in our already successful blue box program by providing municipalities with 50% funding of their net blue box program costs by industry.

This bill, however, goes beyond sustaining and enhancing our blue box system. It will also lead to increased diversion of many other waste materials. This is not only about diverting materials from final disposal and ensuring environmental protection, but also about conserving resources. Again, it's another vital component, another vital strategy for Ontario to follow in order to reduce the amount of garbage we're producing and reduce the amount of garbage we then need to deal with via landfills, incineration or other avenues.

The Waste Diversion Act will create Waste Diversion Ontario, a non-crown, multi-stakeholder corporation with industry, municipal, non-government and Ministry of Environment and Energy representatives on its board of directors. Its purpose will be to develop, implement and fund programs to divert designated waste materials from final disposal. The legislation also provides for the establishment of industry-funded organizations to raise the necessary funds within affected industry sectors to support and implement these waste diversion programs in co-operation with the WDO.

1900

So you see, the legislation speaks to a co-operative effort between government and industry and other levels

of government. I think that any time we can move forward in co-operation between levels of government and private sector stakeholders, we're moving in the right direction, because when we work together to find solutions to these problems, we're obviously going in the right direction.

I was ready to deliver 15 or 20 minutes tonight, but I understand that I have to leave the remaining time to my good friend from Brampton, Mr Spina, so I will turn the floor over to Mr Spina.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): I'm pleased to participate in this albeit small portion of this debate. I want to address a couple of issues. One that my colleagues addressed was with regard to the Ministry of Environment and Energy, with its oversight and approval responsibilities under this bill, which will ensure that the WDO operations serve the public interest and that they promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling. This legislation reaffirms the government's commitment to provide municipalities with the tools they need to deliver waste diversion service. This bill was conceived as a means to establish not only a sustainable financial footing for the municipal blue box recycling services, but to deal with other wastes as well.

On that note, I want to diverge just for a moment to say that in Peel we are extremely proud of the fact that not only do we have a blue box program, but we have expanded it to a grey box program. We have now among our households in the cities of Mississauga and Brampton a blue and a grey box program, where we divide our recyclable materials: the blue box in the traditional manner for plastics and glass bottles and that sort of thing, as well as milk and juice containers, and the grey box program is specifically geared toward recyclable materials of paper and cardboard.

I have to tell you that it is something we are extremely proud of. I drive around other neighbourhoods in the GTA and the province and it's very interesting to see that we are one of the few municipal areas with a two-box program that automatically begins that diversion process at the household curb. The blue box is obviously of high priority and we want to sustain it, we want to improve it and we want to extend the blue box program. This bill will ensure, by engaging the support of industry stewards, who will be paying a share of the net costs of the municipal blue box system—exactly 50%. It's significant, but we certainly feel it is a fair amount.

By implementing this legislation, Ontario will exceed its 50% waste reduction goal. We know and we are confident that this legislation will facilitate increased diversion of many other waste materials and create a mechanism to develop new stewardship programs for as yet untapped resources in the waste system. At the end of the day, the bill is about making use of resources that would otherwise be disposed of.

While we talk about other resources of disposal of waste, I want to bring forward and show the people of this province and this Legislature a crown jewel that we have in Brampton and Peel. It's called KMS Peel and it is

an energy-from-waste facility opened under the NDP government, the last known incinerator in this province to have been opened under the NDP government, in 1992. But do you know what? They almost shut it down because they have this ideological penchant that you can't have incinerators in your backyard. Let me tell you about KMS Peel and its energy-from-waste program. This facility consumes almost 50% of all waste created in Mississauga and Brampton. Second, it will take all materials—literally all materials—into its facility that can be burned.

"But is this safe?" we may ask. I know the NDP, with their ideological bent about emissions, were so concerned they doubled the emissions standards to make sure that this place wouldn't open. Guess what? When it opened, it exceeded the standards that the NDP government of the day put into place. In fact, the emissions from this facility have less impact on the public than standing next to a cigarette smoker on the street. I stress that. It has less impact than standing next to a cigarette smoker on the street in terms of its emissions.

"What about the ash?" you ask. Because let's face it, anybody who knows simple chemistry understands that if you burn any element at a high enough temperature, you can break it down to its natural elements. This facility does exactly that. The remaining ash is then able to be reused and recycled for asphalt. That is one of the key components of the remaining ash that comes out of this energy-from-waste facility.

We talk about energy from waste. What does that mean? The energy, the electrical power that comes as a result of the burning of this waste in a completely, 100%, safe manner, results in 150 megawatts per week being produced at a lower rate to the community than normal hydro rates. Guess where they usually source this? They are permitted under the laws of Ontario to sell this energy from waste almost directly to our local hospital. That allows our hospital to buy energy and power at a lower cost than even that which they would source from Hydro.

I just want to say in closing that we are extremely proud of this energy-from-waste facility that was built purely in the face of the government of the day. It is extremely successful. I want to tell the people from Toronto that all their garbage issues would be resolved by having three energy-from-waste facilities in Metro. They would never have to look at a Keele Valley dump again.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I guess the member for Brampton is asking us in Toronto whether we're into incineration. I don't think that day will ever come in Toronto. I think the reality and the concern for public health are a bit too documented to get into incineration.

Mr Spina: In 12 years, not one complaint from anybody in the entire community.

Mr Colle: I hope he's not speaking on behalf of his government, saying they're in favour of incineration as the solution.

I think the solutions are really in terms of changing our attitude toward what this government calls waste. In

fact, this bill has the wrong title when it talks about the Waste Diversion Act. In most progressive countries, they refer to this as resource diversion. They don't consider these products waste, they consider them resources. Many of the products we consider garbage or waste are really products that can be transformed into more useful, reusable products. Right from the beginning, the very title demonstrates that this government is really still 20 years behind the rest of the world in terms of its attitude toward what they do with resources that have been used. That's the first comment we'd like to put on the record in terms of what this act does or doesn't do. Again, I think it's typical in the title. It should be the resource diversion act rather than the Waste Diversion Act.

1910

We're not going to change this government's attitude toward the environment with this bill in one evening, but we'd certainly like to put a number of things before the public. I would say the fundamental problem with this bill is that it doesn't give municipalities the financial ability to do the job the government is asking them to do. If the government were to fund municipalities properly, they could do an amazing job of ensuring that this problem which is plaguing Ontario is reduced to a more manageable one. But this bill really provides very little funding, if any. In fact, it doesn't share the funds that they collect from taxes; it doesn't bring them back into the municipalities. So municipalities are really caught. They have to pay for all their recycling expenses with very little help from this government. In essence one of the first things the Mike Harris government did when it came to power was that it stopped all provincial funding for the municipal blue box program. At one time in the 1980s, Ontario was actually beginning to lead the world in this area, but now it's really way back in the pack in terms of initiatives in recycling and reuse.

It's also interesting to note that cities like Halifax and Edmonton are diverting 65% of their garbage from landfill sites—65%. Ontario diverts less than one third, and that is not really acceptable. This bill isn't really going to put a dent in that. One example of providing the tools, as they say, to the municipalities—and I'll talk about this a little later—is that the Ontario government collects over \$40 million a year in environmental levies on products sold at the LCBO, but the government allocates only \$5 million a year of this levy for waste reduction. They collect \$40 million on this environmental levy on LCBO products—the bottles of spirits, alcohol and beer—but only \$5 million goes back to the municipalities. I think this is at the root of the problem, why there really isn't serious waste or resource diversion in Ontario today. This bill does very little toward that.

I think it's also part of the government's role to change attitudes. I mentioned whether things should be treated as waste or as resources that can be put to good use. The member from Brampton mentioned that now they've got a grey box program in Brampton, which is wonderful, but we've had the grey box system in Toronto for many years. We've had the blue box. We also have a

green box program. But putting boxes on the curb doesn't solve your waste diversion problem. People say, "Have you got a blue box program? We've got these boxes." Well, you can have boxes of all different colours; meanwhile, we are wasting too much. We are not very smart in how we use products we produce. More and more we're becoming a society that produces and doesn't think of the long-term consequences. The production doesn't take into account the fact that these products may end up in someone's landfill or that there's a cost, at the end, to our environment and our society.

In Europe, for instance, there are all kinds of programs in place, whether it be automobile or computer manufacturers, such that manufacturers are responsible for recycling or reusing the end product. So when you get rid of an automobile, whether it's Volkswagen or Ford of Europe, you're responsible for returning that product to Ford so it doesn't end up in landfill sites. If you walk along any major street in main cities in Ontario, like Toronto and Hamilton, one of the things you notice more and more is used computers and computer monitors to be picked up, supposedly by our waste collection system. We've got all these computers being made to be obsolete in a year or two and they are now constantly filling up our landfill sites. Where do all these computers now go that become obsolete after a year or two? If you walk up any street on garbage day, you'll see people are throwing out those old monitors and computer parts. I think there should be a responsibility on the part of IBM or Dell or whomever. There's got to be a system of their taking care of that product when you've finished using it, rather than it being the responsibility of municipal taxpayers to take care of that product once it's disposed of. But right now people buy the product, they use it, throw it on the curbside and expect the municipality to pick it up and pay for it. We see all kinds of examples of that.

A simple thing in terms of what we do with our lawns—go through any community in Ontario and you'll see that everybody is still into having the front lawn being manicured grass. We know that's not a good use of our front lawns. People are now using natural flowers, perennials, annuals and rock gardens because all of those grass clippings, all that nitrogen you use, ends up in our water table. It's also very expensive. Again, where do the grass clippings go? They're part of our landfill etc, although now they have a program for diverting grass clippings. So we have to change our lifestyle a bit—not dramatically. If you start planting flowers instead of having the old suburban grass, it's not going to be the end for all of us.

Also, if you go to the grocery store—I know in Holland they have banned plastic bags. There must be 100 billion plastic bags floating around Ontario. Those things are basically indestructible, those little garbage bags. They're all over the place, at the roadside, littering. They are not good use. As you know, we've been encouraged for years, if you go grocery shopping, to take cloth bags and reuse them. Again, we're generally—and I speak for myself—just a bit too lazy to do that, but that's

what we should be doing. But we're not encouraged to do that. In the long run, we would save a lot of valuable natural resources and would stop filling up our countryside with all this plastic that, again, lasts for 1,000 years. When they look down on earth from Mars, they'll see these yellow No Frills grocery bags all over the place.

I'd also like to mention that I think we've got a lot to learn from our seniors in terms of what to do with so-called waste when we buy products. In parts of west Toronto or parts of my riding of Eglinton-Lawrence, if you go by the homes of seniors, you'll see that sometimes all they have is maybe half a blue box filled—and that's once-a-week pickup—and they'll have one garbage bag or half a garbage bag picked up. That's for a whole week. That's because a lot of seniors, for one thing, do not buy all the canned and fancy-packaged goods. A lot of seniors, especially those who have come to Toronto from all over the world, are used to buying fresh vegetables and fruit, so there's no loss of packaging or cans and boxes. What happens is that there is less waste. Essentially, they don't go to your big giant box store and come home with the minivan full of all these boxes and boxes; they go to their local grocery stores and shop fresh and just buy for that day or for two days. As I said, we should maybe talk to seniors who have come to Toronto from other parts of the world and ask them how they can get by with so little garbage thrown out that goes into landfill sites.

As I said, just walk by some of these homes in west Toronto and you'll see the amazing recycling that takes place. In their backyards—now it's becoming very popular—they actually plant fruit trees and have tomatoes, zucchini, eggplant, okra, all kinds of wonderful vegetables. That's another way of not producing waste, and it's a good use of their property.

I would also like to mention that seniors and a lot of people from different parts of the world have some very good ideas in terms of using products properly and not overbuying. I think the old adage is, "Buy what you need, not what you want." I know there are immense consumer pressures, but sometimes we have to stop and say, "Why are we buying all this packaging? Why are we buying all these big boxes? Why all the Styrofoam?"

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If you go along main streets on garbage night, if you go to Spadina and Dundas tonight, if it's garbage night, you will see tonnes and tonnes of cardboard boxes piled up sky high, all this packaging that occurs that eventually has to end up recycled somewhere. That's a cost and that's something that says a lot about what we buy and what we use and what we do with our products.

One of the main problems I have with this bill is that there's a very apparent double standard in it. It was brought out in the committee hearings on Bill 90 that if you buy a bottle of beer in Ontario from the Beer Store, or whatever they're called—they used to call them Brewers Retail—you have to bring that bottle back and you get your money back. So people are used to returning the bottles to the Beer Store and you don't find

beer bottles in the recycling blue box. That system has worked well in Ontario forever. I guess everybody—I can't remember when it started. In the province of Ontario, when you buy beer from the Beer Store, you're expected to return that and there's a deposit-return system.

Yet, as was mentioned at the committee, there's a double standard for the LCBO. The LCBO essentially has a charmed life. They don't require returns or deposits. If you walk up most streets, you'll see that the blue box program is actually an LCBO bottle program. All the blue boxes tend to be filled with wine bottles or liquor bottles; not at all houses but at a lot of them. The municipalities are actually doing recycling for the LCBO, whose customers don't have to return bottles. Therefore, municipalities have to pick up this tab and the LCBO has all this money, plus, as I said, that \$40-million levy that doesn't go back to the municipalities. Essentially, the LCBO isn't required to abide by the same rules as everybody else, to the detriment of the municipalities that pay these huge tabs because the glass that is collected from the wine bottles or liquor bottles is not marketable. It goes to the landfill sites or sits there in storage, with no value. So the tonnes and tonnes of glass that are collected from the LCBO are collected at great expense by municipalities. This bill requires Beer Stores to continue the deposit-return system, yet it is silent on the LCBO. The LCBO doesn't have to use the 3Rs.

In fact, as you know, the LCBO now is big into selling beer. I think 18% of their sales are beer. If you go to the Beer Store and they sell you a beer bottle, you have to return it. If you go to the LCBO and buy a bottle of beer, you can throw it in the blue box and have the municipality pay for it out of their property taxes. They, the government-run monopoly, are selling the same beer bottle and you don't have to return to the LCBO. If you buy a bottle of beer from the other government monopoly, the Beer Store, you have to return it. So here are two government monopolies—basically that's what they are—and this bill allows one to not abide by the recycling/reuse rule. It's about time we had some basic responsibility on the LCBO to be more environmentally conscious.

At one time I remember Jack Layton and Olivia Chow were in front of the LCBO. They said, "Everybody, on Saturday bring your old wine bottles into the LCBO so they'll be more responsible." Anyway, it hasn't really caught on. The LCBO is still essentially not doing anything about recycling and you don't have to return them. Maybe it's about time this government made the LCBO more environmentally responsible. But this act doesn't do that, despite the fact the LCBO grossed over \$900 million last year. And you know their stores; they can afford to recycle. Their stores are the Taj Mahals of booze. You'd think Martha Stewart shopped there all the time. You're almost afraid to go in unless you've got a jacket and tie on.

They've got millions to spend on these fancy Taj Mahal stores, they've got billboards advertising the

LCBO on the boards of the Corel Centre—talk about the yacht and Hydro One; I want to look at the LCBO books and see what they do with their millions. Why can't they afford to basically have a deposit-return system like the beer stores do, if they've got all these millions? Yet they don't.

I think it would really reduce the cost of recycling for municipalities, it would really free up a lot of room in the blue box and it would be responsible on behalf of the LCBO to follow the rules everybody else follows. But this government again is refusing to make the LCBO abide by basic rules. It's a government monopoly, but when you criticize the LCBO, I guess it's like criticizing mother church. You've got to be very careful of what you say about the LCBO, because we know how powerful the LCBO is. They can actually be exempt from this legislation, which I find very, very difficult to accept.

Maybe one day there will be recycling rules for the LCBO, and I think the LCBO would not suffer because of it. In fact, it would probably end up saving them money in the long run, and we could all benefit by not having all these wine bottles cluttering up our landfill sites etc.

I think this bill is a very small step by the government to get back into recycling. As you know, they basically abandoned recycling funding under Mike Harris. They wanted nothing to do with it. They downloaded it on to the municipalities as they've downloaded everything. This is an attempt to come back with a quarter measure to pretend they're back into recycling and waste diversion. It is a very, very basic piece of legislation that fools no one and is supported very moderately by people who know that this government is not going to do much else, so they accept it as a sort of token bill that helps a little bit and gets things started again. At least it's good in that small respect. But overall it's a very weak piece of legislation that does not fund municipal recycling. It's an attempt to make people think they're doing something, when in fact very little is being done.

I think the time has come—with the horrendous cost of shipping garbage to Michigan or this government's penchant for incinerating or shipping it up to Kirkland Lake—when this government is going to be asked, "Why haven't you been more serious about resource diversion?" This bill is still about the old attitude of waste diversion. It's about time they came into the 21st century.

The Speaker: Just before we resume the debate, the Attorney General has a point of order.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate that. I wanted to advise you that we have two very special visitors with us this evening. They are my daughter Sara and my son Cory, and they join us in the members' gallery today.

The Speaker: We welcome our honoured guests.

Further debate?

Mr Kormos: I don't want to interfere in the Attorney General's family life, but he has a peculiar way of punishing his kids.

I've got 20 minutes, but I'm going to share 10 minutes of that with Rosario Marchese, because he's been working on a speech. He's been working on it all day. He's been locked away in his office; I heard him from my adjoining office. I looked in and there he was in front of the mirror. He's been working on this for a good chunk of time, so I want people to stick around and pay attention.

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This bill could have been so much better, and the New Democrats tried to make it better. New Democrats fought to get this bill to committee and moved amendment after amendment after amendment, but would this Minister of Environment have anything to do with them? No, because you—yes you, Minister of Environment—have no intention of this bill being effective, do you? You sit there looking at your watch, just waiting for this thing to be over with. You haven't been a particularly competent Minister of Energy, and you haven't been a particularly competent Minister of Environment either, have you? One of the interesting things is that this Minister of Environment—yes, you, Minister—had made a lot of noise during his leadership campaign. Do you remember that, Mr Four Per Cent? Four per cent is but a margin of error in most polls. You could have gotten no votes and it still could have shown up as 4%—yes, Minister, you—by virtue of being the mere margin of error. But you, during the course of your campaign for the leadership, which I don't have to tell you that you lost—you came last; you came last first—you promised, you expressed—yes, you—your strong commitment to, of all things, a deposit return system for the LCBO. You promised. You said it loud and clear. You appealed to those 4% who may have voted for you that you advocated and believed in. By God, you were going to make a bottle return system for LCBO.

Mr Marchese: He's very quiet now.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):
He's not here.

Mr Kormos: That's improper. If you read the standing orders and the practices of the House, you'd know that. I'd be very careful, if I were you. Yes, you, Minister. You promised, and what did you deliver? Nothing. So what is it we may call you as a result of that? Far be it from me to break the rules, but I do suggest to you that reference to a recent Jim Carrey movie might be very appropriate, wouldn't it?

Mr Marchese: Which one?

Mr Kormos: Remember the Jim Carrey movie?

Interjection: Dumb and Dumber?

Mr Kormos: Yes.

I say to you, Minister of Environment, that we know you have no interest in the environment. In fact, your parliamentary assistant over here has done little to advance the interests of the Ministry of the Environment or of the environment. You've created one of the most significant crises this province has seen in terms of public health, because under your watch, your private-sector-corporate-lab-testing friends, the ones you imposed on

every municipality in this province, have put at risk the lives of not just tens of thousands but hundreds of thousands of people. What do you have to say? "Oh, gosh, I don't know. They never told me. I know this has been going on since Lord knows when, but I just found out about it." You're the minister. As was mentioned earlier today, maybe if you showed up at the office once in a while, you'd have found out. Go back there tonight after the credit card is exhausted—yes, you, Minister—and go through the pile of memos. You've got to read the stuff. You can't just rely upon bluster and quick wit. You've got to read the stuff.

Maybe the first time you were made a minister of the crown you should have read what the standards are for ministers and what "ministerial responsibility and accountability" means. Yes, and if you want to take a look at it yourself, refer to Marleau, House of Commons Procedure and Practice, a very concise and very current definition of what "ministerial responsibility and accountability" means. Let me read to you briefly: "The principle of individual ministerial responsibility holds that ministers are accountable not only for their own actions as department heads, but also for the actions of their subordinates."

So I'm afraid you're cooked, you're done like dinner, you're finished. If you had any integrity or courage at all, you would acknowledge that you have failed in your ministerial capacity, because you're responsible not only for your own acts, but for the acts of your subordinates. You make reference during scrums to what must be the largest conspiracy ever concocted: that everybody knew but you. There is only one inference to be drawn: that you're simply not up to the job. Isn't that an interesting observation?

You put hundreds of thousands of people's lives at risk and now you're searching, scrambling frantically, for some little minion to blame it on, to hang out and dry. I say to you, Minister, that's shameful, it's disgusting and you've set new low standards for ministerial accountability and responsibility in this Legislature or any other Parliament.

One of the problems as well—and again, the New Democrats tried to cure the shortcomings of this bill. The critic for the NDP worked hard developing amendments and moving them in committee, but had them turned down time after time again.

By the way, you should know that the NDP environmental critic right now, as we speak, is over at Global studios up in north Toronto with the member for St Catharines, the environmental critic for the official opposition. I want folks to watch Focus Ontario this Saturday. It's on at 6:30 pm on Saturday on Global. You'll see Marilyn Churley, the environmental critic on behalf of the NDP, from Toronto-Danforth, along with Jim Bradley, the member for St Catharines, tear a strip off the hide of a Minister of Environment who has put at risk hundreds of thousands of people. Global TV, Focus Ontario, 6:30 pm this Saturday; I encourage you to take a look and see what the NDP have to say about a Minister

of Environment who is beyond irresponsible—yes, you are, sir—who has conducted himself at a level of negligence—sir, you have. Were it not for your ability at the end of the day to plead ignorance, albeit self-imposed—ignorance is bliss, I suppose is the theme of the ministers in this government. It's negligence that under other circumstances, were you but a mere layperson, could well attract other forms of culpability.

We have grave reservations about this bill before us, Bill 90, as it stands. It could have been a progressive step forward. As it is, like most of the legislation—why, perhaps all of the legislation—that you and this government have put forward, it is but lip service of the cheapest kind. You rely upon the title of the bill far more than its contents. When you look at the contents, you create a piece of legislation that is so weak, that is so irrelevant, that is so far from missing its target that it becomes yet another statute to fill the statute books that fill the shelves of law libraries and lawyers' offices and other resource centres across the province.

This isn't good legislation, and you shouldn't be proud of it. You resisted, albeit effectively, the opportunity you had to make it meaningful. You did that by turning down New Democratic Party amendments. New Democrats believe strongly in environmental protection through the utilization of the 3Rs and through approaching it in a meaningful way. You've denied Ontarians the opportunity to do that. We're not particularly proud of this bill, and you'd be naive to be proud of it yourself, Minister.

The Speaker: The member for Trinity-Spadina.

Applause.

Mr Marchese: I want to thank the fan club for sticking around. I want to welcome Will Stewart here. Will, are you there? There he is. Cameras over there. Will Stewart is here. He's just checking things out, making sure that the whip is in charge and that people are here in case we call quorum. Welcome, Will.

The minister was very quiet in response to what my friend from Niagara Centre was saying. You said so much about him and he was so silent the whole night. I couldn't believe it.

Mr Beaubien: The poor minister.

Mr Marchese: The poor minister said nothing. I was here the whole time, not a peep.

Mr Kormos: What's the matter, Stockwell? Cat got your tongue?

Mr Marchese: Very quiet tonight. It might be unfair to speak about the minister in this way, but he's very quiet tonight. I think some people appreciate it.

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Speaking to Bill 90, it's a nothing bill. But if you listen to the government members, they're going to fix all the environmental problems in the world with this little Bill 90.

Mr Kormos: But from the sound of it tonight, it's a nothing minister.

Mr Marchese: Please, leave the minister alone. Give him a break.

Mr Kormos: He's down and out?

Mr Marchese: Come on. He's got two ministries; he's the House leader. Please, give him a break. He's overloaded. He's overworked. Things can happen. Mistakes happen. You give him two or three portfolios and mistakes happen. But give him a break. I think we should give him a break. Look, the leader, Mr Eves, has given him so many portfolios: energy, environment, House leader. Good God, how could you not miss a couple of things? So he's got to take some—

Mr Kormos: So why does he try to blame it on little people?

Mr Marchese: Well, because at the end of the day, you've got to pass the blame to somebody else.

On Bill 90: it's a nothing bill. We said as much in the hearings. It is true that the municipalities liked it. Joe Tascona, they did. The municipalities came and they said, "Oh, we like it." Of course they like it, because it's the only way to get some money from the private sector, which is willing to recycle. Why do they want to recycle? Because you can shift the cost to the property taxpayer, right?

What is the government's contribution toward this whole thing? Nihil, in Latin. Zip. Zero. They give nothing toward environmental issues. So they produced a bill that says, "OK, maybe we can find a way to cost-share this." Municipalities put up some money, the private sector puts up some money, and originally the language was that they would give no more than 50%. The municipalities got a bit ticked off and they said, "What do you mean, 'no more than 50%'?" Because what it means is they could give 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 22%, 23%, 24% or whatever, right? If it was in a language where they said they will pay 50% and the cities will pay 50%, at least the city could feel good that they could get half of the money out of this. So the cities said, "If we can't get any money from the province"—even though in the US, states and the federal government make incredible financial contributions toward environmental issues, in this province we're giving very little, if anything, toward dealing with environmental problems.

It does nothing to deal with issues of reusing or reduction and/or composting. There is a hierarchy, and recycling is at the bottom of that list. Reusing is on top of recycling, reducing is on top of recycling, composting—and I tell you, I do this. I don't know how many others do it in this place. It's part of a great educational program that has to go on. But what does the government say about the issue of composting? It says very little. In fact, on the issue—

Mr Kormos: The ministers recycle their credit cards.

Mr Marchese: We won't talk about credit cards. It's not part of Bill 90.

In fact, on the issue of reduction, reusing, composting, the bill says it "may include" the three Rs—only "may." Not "must"; "may." "May" is a nothing word. It means, "Yes, they can, maybe they will, maybe they won't," but they probably won't. So it says a waste diversion program may include research and development about waste management, but it doesn't have to. Very likely it

won't, because if it's not obliged to, it will not. And it may include activities to promote the products that result from waste diversion and it may include education and public awareness to support waste diversion, but it doesn't say they must.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Must or shall; same thing. It would obligate municipalities to do something. But to do so would mean that the province would have to help them with some dough, right? You can't on the one hand say, "You cities will do all these things," and then on the other hand say, "You're on your own. Go to your taxpayer to find the money to do those things." That's why it doesn't obligate them to do waste diversion. It doesn't obligate them to do waste management. It may include activities to promote the products that result from waste diversion. But you understand, there's no obligation here. So this bill is all about recycling and nothing more. But even there—

Mr Kormos: Well, the government is going to recycle Ms Clitheroe.

Mr Marchese: I don't know what's going to happen there.

Mr Kormos: They're going to reuse her. They might reduce her a little bit.

Mr Marchese: I'm not sure what will happen with that.

There's a clause about what the newspapers can do. Newspaper companies can pay in kind as opposed to sharing the cost of recycling with cities. So the way they can share in kind is to say, "OK, instead of giving you money, you can put in some ads, and we'll add it all up. The cost of all the ads amounts to so much, and here is"—

Mr Colle: A nice ad in the obituary section.

Mr Marchese: An ad in the obituary section saying the cities are dead, "We're dying." Yes, they could do that. Cities are dying. I don't know that we have to put in an ad, but they could do that—a free space, one whole page saying, "Cities are dying." There's a whole cost to that. It's an in-kind kind of cost. You understand, taxpayers. But the newspaper companies don't necessarily have to put up any money to help out. They can help in that way, in kind, but not with the dough that municipalities need.

Mr Kormos: So they get a free ride, like the Sun.

Mr Marchese: The Sun.

Mr Kormos: The Star.

Mr Marchese: The Toronto Star, a thick newspaper.

Mr Kormos: But the National Post is not as thick as it used to be.

Mr Marchese: The National Post used to be thicker. They're all thick papers. They're all thick; they don't support the NDP. They do support other political parties. They do waste a lot, consume a lot, put down a lot of trees to get those papers out and those ads out. But they don't have to put up any money. They could just do that all in kind.

The point about this bill is that it really isn't so much to be proud of. But, Speaker, you've heard a number of them, the ones who read their speeches, the ones who—I don't know if Will Stewart had an opportunity to write some of these speeches, but—

Mr Colle: Who is this Will Stewart anyway?

Mr Marchese: He's the executive assistant to the government whip.

Mr Kormos: Is he a minion?

Mr Marchese: No, he's probably a nice guy.

People write speeches for these guys and then they read them out and they say, "This is a great bill," and then they say, "This is better than anything the NDP has ever done," or presumably the Liberals.

Mr Kormos: So you mean this guy takes orders from the government whip?

Mr Marchese: He's got to.

Mr Kormos: He's the only one over there who does.

Mr Marchese: He's got to because he gets—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: He pays the other guy.

So Bill 90 is a tiny, little bill. It does some little things about recycling. It does discourage people from reusing, reduction. It does nothing for composting whatsoever. Over 50% of what we throw out in our garbage is compostable, but it has nothing to do with that. So what does it do? All we should do is recycle ministers out of this place.

Mr Colle: Recycle Eleanor's yacht.

Mr Marchese: Yes, Eleanor's yacht could be recycled.

Bill 90 is a nothing bill. I just thought I'd end with that.

The Speaker: Pursuant to the agreement of the House, I am now required to put the question.

Mr Baird has moved third reading of Bill 90, An Act to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Hon Mr Baird: I was certainly offering to separate on the vote, but the member, Mike Colle, says no. That's fine.

Because Will Stewart, Peter Hardie, Brandy Miller, Rob Doyle and Phillip De Souza want to go home early, I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker: That's the best reason I've heard. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

The House adjourned at 1950.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 17 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 17 juin 2002

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

ESTIMATES

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): I have a message from the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor signed by his own hand.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending 31 March 2003 and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): It is with great sadness that I rise in the Legislature following another tragedy, the third since the House resumed, when yet another Ontario woman—a mother, a daughter and a sister—was murdered by a former partner.

As is too often the case, the vicious and senseless attack also took the lives of the child and parents of Shannon Cruse. When such tragedies are repeated, one cannot help but ask, are we doing enough to educate our young women and men?

As an educator, I believe that if we are to prevent relationship abuse, we need to support programs in schools that raise awareness and provide both our daughters and sons with the skills they need to recognize the danger signs.

The record shows that this government is failing to support the very agencies that provide such outreach services. Shelters that provide refuge to women fleeing abuse have had their funding reduced. The Provincial Auditor's report confirmed that overcrowded shelters are being forced to turn away desperate women and children, and serious challenges remain in ensuring rural women are provided with the services and protection they need.

The second anniversary of the murder of Gillian Hadley approaches. As this government continues to review the Hadley recommendations—review and review and review—women in communities throughout our province continue to fear for their lives and the lives of their children.

Premier, the message is simple: implement the Hadley recommendations. And in the budget this afternoon,

women across this province are urging you to take into account the needs of underfunded shelters and restoration of funding to second-stage housing.

PATRICK DUNNE

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I rise today to honour Patrick Dunne, who has announced his retirement as director of education from the London District Catholic School Board effective the end of August—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I apologize. We'll let the member start over. Members, come to order, please.

I'm sorry. We'll allow the member to start over. I apologize for the disruption.

Mr Wood: I rise today to honour Patrick Dunne, who has announced his retirement as director of education from the London District Catholic School Board effective the end of August 2002. He has held this position since 1994 and will be honoured at a retirement party in London on June 18.

Mr Dunne joined what was then the London-Middlesex Catholic School Board 17 years ago from Bruce-Grey, where he was superintendent of operations. With teaching experience in Ireland, he served as a teacher in Canada and as a principal and supervisory officer in Bruce-Grey, holding portfolios dealing with special education and curriculum.

He has a long and impressive list of achievements. He oversaw the amalgamation of the school board, and through his leadership developed a sense of trust among his teachers. By making the tough decisions that were necessary, Mr Dunne turned the financial situation from a deficit board into a board that has a financial surplus. He leaves as his legacy an enormously impressive program of new facilities already built and many other new and renovated facilities on the drawing board.

Pat Dunne is a very strong voice for Catholic education in London and across the province. He exemplifies the mission statement of the London District Catholic School Board: "To serve the Catholic student of London district in a community that nurtures a living faith and provides a quality Catholic education that enables the individual to become a contributing member of the Church and society."

I know that all members of the House will join with me in wishing Pat an old Irish blessing: "May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be always at your back,

and may you be in heaven half an hour before the devil knows you're dead."

CONSTITUENCY CONSULTATION

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): They said it wouldn't work. They said we were crazy to even risk it. They said people would have so many axes to grind that the whole thing would simply dissolve into a shouting match. And you know what? They were all wrong.

It was wonderful: over 60 people giving up a beautiful spring Saturday to spend six hours talking about the things that matter to them and their community. We called it the ADFA constituent assembly, and I commend the process to all members of this legislative body. For my part, I couldn't be more pleased: pleased because a commitment to hearing and listening to the grassroots and then acting on what they tell you helps produce good government. It's also a vital part of my role to assist members of my constituency to talk with each other about shared concerns. I am deeply grateful to those who participated and look forward to continuing this process in the fall.

Based on a survey of interest taken ahead of time, we addressed health, education, environment, amalgamation of course, transportation and other topics. We took pages and pages of notes, all of which have been posted on my Web site, www.tedmcmeekin.com. Like their MPP, these notes are a bit rough and raw in places, but if you want the opportunity to get away from the scripted notes and silly spin often characterizing this place, then check them out, for they are the everyday talking points of real people.

CITY SUMMITS

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I rise today to talk about urban visions. We've been seeing an awful lot in all of the papers, and probably everywhere except this Legislature, about urban visions.

This week Toronto is going to have an opportunity to present three such groups. They will be meeting to talk about all the problems that beset our cities: everything from garbage to gridlock; everything from housing to homelessness; everything from city charters to tenants; everything from culture and heritage to dynamic downtowns. These events are going to take place in Toronto, the capital of Ontario, and they will be here for the public, I hope, to get involved in, to talk about what you need in your cities.

1340

Heritage Toronto will be holding the first event this Wednesday, from 7 o'clock to 10 o'clock, at the University of Toronto's school of architecture, 230 College Street. The second event is open for all of the public at the former Metro Hall at 55 John Street. It's called the People's Summit and it's being run by the Toronto Civic Action Network. The third one, which is by invitation

only, is the City Summit, which is taking place on June 25 and 26. It is, as I said, by invitation only. It's being held by the city of Toronto, the United Way and the Toronto Board of Trade.

It is an opportunity for people to come together to talk about what our cities really need. They don't need where we've been; they need to know where they're going. They need the opportunity to survive. They need the opportunity to grow and to prosper.

I would hope that all members will pay some attention to what comes out of these city summits over the next week.

BEACOCK FAMILY REUNION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House to mention a very important occasion in the lives of a family in the riding of Durham. This summer the Beacock family will celebrate their 75th reunion in Blackstock.

It was in 1831 that Abraham and Harriet Beacock came to Canada from England. They settled briefly in Cavan township before wisely moving to a farm in Cartwright township, located a half mile south and west of Blackstock. The village was then known as Williamsburg.

The descendants of William and Harriet Beacock have made an outstanding contribution to our province. Some were farmers in my riding and others excelled in other walks of life. For over a century, they have been returning home for their reunion.

On July 13, upwards of 150 are expected to attend the celebration at the Blackstock rec centre. They'll be coming from communities across Ontario as well as from Texas, Arkansas and Ohio. The day will include self-guided tours of the original Beacock homestead, games for the children, a potluck lunch and a barbecue in the evening. After the barbecue, they will be entertained by members of the family who would like to perform. It will be a day of renewing acquaintances and reminiscing.

This is but one example of family gatherings taking place this summer in my riding of Durham. I am proud to say that wherever you come from, whether for a few years or over many generations, we all share the simple pleasures of getting together with grandparents, parents, siblings and our extended families. It's one of the things that makes my riding an excellent place to live, work and raise your family.

With the few moments remaining, I would like to introduce Ms Donna Paquette, who is a grade 5 teacher at St Joseph's French immersion centre in Bowmanville. She is here to see the budget today.

LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): How is it possible that the government's own liquor monopoly, the LCBO, doesn't have to recycle, yet it is spending hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on

building these palatial Martha Stewart-type stores that smack of opulence and waste?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): What have you got against Martha Stewart?

Mr Colle: She's your friend, Minister Stockwell.

I ask Mr Stockwell, with \$905 million in profit last year, how can they not have any money to invest in the 3Rs? Sadly, it's the cash-strapped local municipalities and their overtaxed property ratepayers who are forced to pick up the tab and collect tons of LCBO bottles that fill the blue boxes across the province.

Our own provincial government has the gall to collect \$40 million as an environmental levy from the LCBO, yet it only gives \$5 million of that \$40 million toward recycling. No wonder that in the government's latest so-called recycling bill, the Waste Diversion Act, Bill 90, it continues to exempt the LCBO from any recycling responsibility.

What a double standard. Shame on the LCBO and its partner the provincial government that downloads the costs of recycling and so forth on to the rest of us while the provincial government and its liquor monopoly answer to no one. This government says, "Don't even question the LCBO," as it spends millions and millions on these Martha Stewart-type stores that we're paying for, and they won't even recycle when the rest of us have to recycle. Shame on you, Minister Stockwell.

MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I rise to follow up on an issue I spoke to on May 30. At that time, I spoke of the improvements made since 1995 in providing quality health care to dialysis patients in my riding of Scarborough Centre. Today, I again wish to speak about health care delivery in my riding.

Before 1995, my constituents waited impatiently for an MRI to be locally situated at Scarborough General. That was then, when the NDP and the Liberals misruled Ontario for 10 long, lost years. Today, my constituents enjoy the convenience of an MRI located close to home.

Indeed, the Progressive Conservative government has increased MRI machines across the province. When we came to office there were only 12 MRIs in all of Ontario. That was then. Today there are 42. Moreover, the recent speech from the throne made it clear the government will not stand still, as did previous governments. No, the Ernie Eves government plans to add more MRIs and will immediately increase their OHIP-funded hours of operation by 90%. This means that Ontarians will have the best access to MRI diagnosis in all of Canada.

We learn a lot by looking at the past and comparing it to the present. The Ernie Eves government is clearly doing far more to address the health care needs of Ontario's citizens and my constituents in Scarborough Centre than did both the Liberals and the NDP.

4-H MOVEMENT

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): On Saturday, June 8, I had the privilege of attending the opening of the Lennox and Addington 4-H office in Napanee. It is the first county 4-H office to be opened in the province of Ontario.

Lennox and Addington has a long and proud agricultural history, and farming continues to be a significant contributor to our local economy. The 4-H Club has been active in the community for many years, and the Lennox and Addington club has demonstrated the importance of this program by opening the first office in the province.

Currently the club has 160 members and offers the opportunity to participate in almost 30 areas of interest. It continues to offer the more traditional livestock clubs as well as those that involve sports, homemaking and recreation.

Of course, such a venture is made possible only with the generosity and goodwill of volunteers and local businesses. Parents and former 4-Hers are largely responsible for the leadership that is required for such an endeavour. They volunteer countless hours to share their talents and time so that club members can develop in the areas represented by the 4-Hs: head, heart, health and hands.

Business sponsors for this new venture include Brian Munroe, who has made space in his plaza available; Gray's IDA; L&A Milk committee; Canadian Waste Management; Hay Bay Genetics; Country Traditions; M&M Meats; Colour Your World; Picturesque; Gord Bongard; Lyle and Susan Cook; and Sandra Topping.

I am proud to offer my sincere congratulations to all of these members of the Lennox and Addington 4-H Club for opening the first 4-H office in my riding.

NORTH BAY HERITAGE FESTIVAL AND AIR SHOW

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): It is with great pleasure that I rise today to invite everyone to the North Bay Heritage Festival and Grant Forest Products International Air Show over the August civic weekend.

The festival is important to the Nipissing region, not only because it promotes northern Ontario but because it creates a \$5-million to \$7-million economic impact to the entire region. This is one of northern Ontario's largest festivals, with a budget exceeding \$1 million. It is also unique because it is volunteer-driven. I'd like to congratulate John Lechlitter, the management committee and over 800 volunteers who make this event possible.

For the entire weekend, admission is only \$20 and kids under 10 are free. You will get to see major recording artists such as David Usher, Honeymoon Suite, REO Speedwagon, Lonestar, Serial Joe, Natalie McMaster and more. There are also lots of events for children, such as the petting zoo, Kid's Country, the Country Open and the Conklin midway. The feature attraction is world-renowned author and performer Robert Munsch.

The Grant Forest Products International Air Show features the Canadian Snowbirds, the Elvises of the Sky, the SkyHawks parachute team, as well as various Canadian and US military aircraft. Additional activities include Pepsi beach volleyball, the Naval Gun Run and the National Strongman Competition.

For further information on the festival you can go to www.heritagefestival.ca or call us at (705) 474-0400.

1350

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): On Monday, June 10, the member for Niagara Centre, Mr Kormos, raised a point of privilege concerning statements made to the press by the Premier and to the press in this House regarding the Minister of Energy relating to executive compensation.

The member contended that apparent contradictions between statements on this subject by the Premier and the minister and other apparent contradictions between statements made by the minister on different occasions left room for one to draw the conclusion that the minister had exhibited a lack of forthrightness when addressing the House. As a result, the member invited me to find the minister to be, *prima facie*, in contempt of the Legislature.

The Minister of Energy also briefly addressed the point of privilege and discounted the validity of the member's contentions.

I have reviewed the material supplied by the member for Niagara Centre, together with the relevant authorities and precedents. As the member for Niagara Centre pointed out, Erskine May on page 111 of the 22nd edition, under "Misconduct of Members or Officers," states: "The Commons may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as contempt." This citation, however, goes on further than the member quoted to provide reference to one of the most famous such cases in parliamentary history, that of British Cabinet Minister John Dennis Profumo, who knowingly avowed one thing to the House of Commons which was later proved conclusively, and admitted by Profumo, to be untrue. An essential component of this case is that Profumo deliberately set out in a prepared statement to purposely mislead the House and then did so.

The threshold for finding a *prima facie* case of contempt against a member of the Legislature on the basis of deliberately misleading the House is therefore set quite high and is very uncommon. It must involve a proved finding of an overt attempt to intentionally mislead the Legislature. In the absence of an admission from the member accused of the conduct, or of tangible confirmation of the conduct independently proved, a Speaker must assume that no honourable member would engage in such behaviour or that, at most, inconsistent statements were the result of inadvertence or honest mistake.

On this point, I would ask all members to be extremely vigilant about their statements made in this

House. Despite the cut and thrust and the understandable emotion of question period and debates, those statements are held up to the highest possible scrutiny by all observers of this place and, as their statements represent the personal integrity of each member, they must withstand inspection.

I want to address the member for Niagara Centre's citation regarding Speaker Milliken's ruling in the House of Commons regarding statements made by then-Minister of National Defence Art Eggleton. I'm reluctant to accord applicability of that ruling to this case.

Firstly, in that case Mr Eggleton concurred that contradictory statements had been made and that clarification of the reasons for this in a suitable forum was required. Secondly, I see no precedential value to Speaker Milliken's ruling—within the ambit of parliamentary privilege—since, if the ruling is carefully read, it becomes apparent that a *prima facie* case of privilege was not explicitly found. Rather, Speaker Milliken seems to have stopped himself short in that regard and chose instead a novel approach, finding ultimately—without mentioning privilege—that the matter deserved consideration by a committee and inviting a motion to give effect to this result.

I would generally be hesitant to appropriate for myself such an original, informal approach since the precedents, traditions and customs of this House around questions of privilege reveal a more definitive tendency. In my view, there are no shades of grey when it comes to parliamentary privilege, and I would not like to promote such a view by delivering a ruling that failed to address, squarely and solely on its procedural merits, the question raised.

In the case at hand raised by the member for Niagara Centre, I can only find that I am left with what amounts to a genuine disagreement between two honourable members. As a result, I am unable to find that a *prima facie* case of contempt has been made out.

Finally, I want to thank the member for Niagara Centre for the respect and careful choice of words he exhibited when he addressed this matter last week.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to thank you for your consideration of this matter.

The Speaker: I thank the member.

VISITORS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the west gallery today we have Sylvie and Stephan Namisniak, who are visiting us today to discuss and look at the architecture of this building and also the workings of democracy. Steve is an award-winning architect from my riding who continues to design practical and very beautiful buildings. He's also one of 15 people in Canada who are on a North American committee that is reviewing and consistently upgrading architecture. He still teaches architecture. I'd like to welcome them to the House this afternoon and thank them for being here today.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): While we're introducing honoured guests, in the Speaker's gallery we have a former colleague of ours, Mr Leo Jordan, who was the member for Lanark-Renfrew, joining us here today.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The fine gentleman sitting beside Leo is Stanley Brunton, who was reeve of Beckwith township for about the past 30 years and is one of the most successful politicians ever in Lanark country, notwithstanding the excellent representation that Leo Jordan gave to this area.

It's good to see you here, Stan.

The Speaker: We welcome our honoured guests.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1397399 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2002

Mr O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr8, An Act to revive 1397399 Ontario Inc.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

Those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to suspend the proceedings of the House today following routine proceedings until 4 pm, at which time the Minister of Finance will present the budget.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

HOUSE Sittings

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, June, 17, Tuesday, June 18, Wednesday, June 19, and Thursday, June 20, 2002, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1357 to 1402.

The Speaker: Will the members kindly take their seats, please?

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Galt, Doug	Newman, Dan
Arnott, Ted	Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Gravelle, Michael	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Parsons, Emie
Bartolucci, Rick	Hastings, John	Peters, Steve
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Pupatello, Sandra
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Boyer, Claudette	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Bradley, James J.	Johns, Helen	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Christopherson, David	Kells, Morley	Sergio, Mario
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Smitherman, George
Clark, Brad	Kwinter, Monte	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Levac, David	Stockwell, Chris
Colle, Mike	Martinuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Crozier, Bruce	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Cunningham, Dianne	McDonald, AL	Tumull, David
Curling, Alvin	McLeod, Lyn	Wettlauffer, Wayne
DeFaria, Carl	McMeekin, Ted	Wilson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Flaherty, Jim	Mushinski, Marilyn	

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martin, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 71; the nays are 6.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I declare the motion carried.

ORAL QUESTIONS

WATER QUALITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question to the Minister of Energy, Minister of the Environment and government House leader, in his capacity today as the Minister of the Environment.

Last week, Premier Eves blamed public servants for the fact that your ministry did not inform the public of problems of incomplete testing and lack of timely reporting of drinking water tests by MDS Laboratories for some 19 days. Minister, you've had a weekend to reconsider, to investigate and to reflect. Do you still contend that, despite the tragedy of Walkerton, for 19 days not a single employee of the Ministry of the Environment phoned your office or the Premier's office, prepared an issue report or an incident report, or in some way brought to your attention that serious problems were

being encountered with the improper handling of water testing by MDS Laboratories?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Yes.

Mr Bradley: Again, Mr Minister, with the tragedy of Walkerton, where seven people died and thousands became seriously ill, still etched deeply in the minds of the most senior levels of your government, and with sensitivity to water contamination issues at an all-time high, how is it that no one in the Ministry of the Environment, according to the Premier or to you, saw fit to provide an issue report of this kind, which is complete information on an issue of that kind, to you, your political staff, the Premier or his political staff on such a contentious matter as improper water testing by a private laboratory for some 19 days? Are you absolutely certain, beyond any doubt, that you or your staffs were not alerted to this serious situation by the Ministry of the Environment staff?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Yes.

Mr Bradley: In February of this year, Fine Analysis Laboratories of Hamilton was charged with, among other things, the improper handling of drinking water tests. The investigation of this situation actually had begun several months earlier, back in the year 2001. As a result of these revelations, the Liberal member for Hamilton East, Mr Agostino, wrote a letter in February of this year to Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer demanding that an audit of all private labs testing drinking water be undertaken, and I publicly called for this action to be taken as well.

I know that ministers were perhaps distracted by the Conservative leadership contest at that time, but could the minister tell the people of Ontario why such an investigation of all private labs testing drinking water was not initiated after this warning signal in February of this year, this warning signal being the discovery after several months of investigation that Fine Analysis Laboratories was in fact improperly handling drinking water tests, among other tests?

Hon Mr Stockwell: They are audited on a regular basis. They are audited by two agencies, which take great lengths to go about auditing and accrediting labs. So they in fact were audited.

With respect to the ministry being involved, the Walkerton report, part two, came out May 23, which gave us recommendations and the authority to move forward with respect to investigating.

Let me just say that obviously you have no information that would indicate there is any example where the ministry staff would have told my staff. You have no evidence, nothing to prove this, no fact. You're just insinuating, or a conspiracy has built up in your mind over the weekend to try and implicate my office with respect to the knowledge. It can only, I suppose, be done to try to muddy my name and sully my reputation. When I stand in this House, Mr Speaker, and I answer the questions, I answer them honestly, and I can tell this House categorically that at no time during that intervening period of

time did my office get notified until the Tuesday that I spoke of. So I think it's beneath these honourable members in this House to suggest otherwise. If there is any fact, any credence, anything you have to prove otherwise, I suggest you table it, and, if not, I think we should stop doing that to each other.

1410

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy and government House leader. Minister, it was reported this morning that Tory spin doctor Paul Rhodes was paid a quarter of a million dollars at taxpayers' expense to give spinning advice on the Walkerton tragedy.

When we first brought this up in the House two years ago, then-Minister of the Environment Dan Newman said, on September 27, 2000, "I indicated that there has been a contract for a three-month period within the Ministry of the Environment.... Rhodes Consulting is being paid \$50,000." Minister, can you explain how a three-month, \$50,000 contract turns into almost a quarter million—\$240,000? Tell this House why working families should be on the hook for this kind of taxpayers' money.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Obviously, I think all would consider the Walkerton situation to be an emergency situation, an emerging issue that required immediate action on behalf of the ministers involved in the environment during that period of time. Under those terms and conditions, Mr Paul Rhodes was retained. We retained him because we needed expert advice, and he provided that expert advice.

The minister at the time, Mr Newman, provided an accurate answer about the \$50,000 contract for the period, which was extended. The contract wasn't renewed at the end of April simply because the process had been completed and the Walkerton two report was supposed to be submitted by Justice O'Connor just a few short weeks later. So the answers you got in the House were absolutely accurate. The work being done by Mr Rhodes was of an emergency nature to deal with the situation in Walkerton and to help rectify, hopefully, the situation we found ourselves in with the tragedy in Walkerton.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, what we do know on this side of the House is that your Tory friends are always rewarded, except that it's at taxpayers' expense. Paul Rhodes wasn't just working on that Walkerton file to make the Premier at the time look good when he was preparing for his hearing; he was also the senior adviser on Elizabeth Witmer's leadership campaign. While he was doing this, he was contracted with the Minister of the Environment, and it was extended. Who was that Minister of the Environment at that point? Elizabeth Witmer.

Minister, this is the second example of ministers abusing taxpayers' dollars and taking advantage of those

dollars to pay for their own leadership bids. I expect an answer from this Minister of Environment. Do you not think it's time to stand up and ask that leadership candidate to pay back the money to the taxpayers spent on the adviser to her leadership campaign?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I know Mr Rhodes was working for the Ministry of the Environment at the time, providing good, sage advice to the minister and to the ministry with respect to the Walkerton issue.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I wish I could say the same for Mr Smitherman with respect to the homeless people in Princess Margaret Hospital, but I can't do that.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): You cost the taxpayers \$1 million.

Hon Mr Stockwell: There he goes again, half-cocked. He wants to sit in here but not help the homeless in his riding.

I know the minister involved. I know her to be a very honourable individual, someone who works diligently and hard for the taxpayers. I reject every challenge you make. I reject every accusation you make. I don't know a more integral, important, accepting, honest individual in this House than Elizabeth Witmer. I don't believe you.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, the conflict of interest with Paul Rhodes doesn't just end there. In addition to the \$240,000 at taxpayers' expense, he was also on contract to MDS Laboratories, the private testing lab now at the centre of controversy because you and your ministry couldn't ensure they were doing their job. Instead of hiring water inspectors, you hire an excuse-maker who has a huge conflict of interest, on contract to both MDS labs and the Minister of the Environment. Is it not obvious to you? It seems to be obvious to the rest of us in this House, except those sitting on that side of the House. I say to the minister, it would be nice to know that once in a while someone is looking out for the best interests of taxpayers and the families of Ontario.

Minister, what do you have to say in light of the fact that there was a conflict of interest, both with the contract being held at the same time, by the same person, and the fact that this individual was assisting in a leadership campaign?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Who's looking out for the hard-working families and the taxpayers of the province of Ontario? The Conservative government of Ontario is looking after the taxpayers of Ontario. This is a government that has had a record number of balanced budgets, over 800,000 new jobs, hundreds of thousands of people off welfare and tax reductions to make us more competitive.

It's insulting that you sit across this floor and suggest that people should be looking out for taxpayers. When your administration had a kick at the can, you ran up deficits and taxes. When they had a kick at the can, they ran up deficits, debt and taxes. Who looks after the taxpayers in this province? We look after the taxpayers in this province, and they are endorsing this with two

majority governments and, without any doubt in my mind, three majority governments very shortly.

WATER QUALITY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Deputy Premier. The plot thickens regarding your government's responsibility for the botched water testing in this province once again. You've spent the last week promising to investigate the problem with MDS labs while at the same time tarnishing the outcome by pointing fingers and blaming everyone else but yourselves.

If that wasn't bad enough, now we find out that Paul Rhodes—remember Paul Rhodes?—was working at the same time for the Ministry of the Environment, putting spin on the Walkerton tragedy, working for MDS labs, which was testing Walkerton's water, and also working for a Tory leadership candidate: you, Minister, who were then the Minister of the Environment. Don't you think there's something wrong here?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'd be pleased to refer the question to the very capable Minister of Environment and Energy.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I will add, with respect to the relationship you're trying to align between the Ministry of the Environment and MDS, that Mr Rhodes declared that conflict and removed himself from any discussions, any debate, any conversations or decisions with respect to MDS and the Ministry of the Environment.

It clearly has been a situation where he in fact has come forward at each time when this was available and put it on the table. He wasn't working in concert with anybody with respect to the conflict. He's been very clear. He told people. He wrote letters to ensure that this was in fact the case.

I don't think you can tie a conflict there. He was very upfront and aboveboard with respect to working for MDS, while he was working for the Ministry of the Environment at the same time.

Ms Churley: Deputy Premier, the Ministry of the Environment was paying Paul Rhodes up to \$17,000 a month—wouldn't we all like a salary like that?—almost \$240,000 altogether to spin the tragedy in Walkerton, while at the same time he was advising you on your leadership bid.

Minister, something is rotten here and the people of Ontario deserve to find out what it is. I say to you, as I said on Thursday, that an internal investigation into what happened at the Ministry of the Environment and MDS labs is not good enough. More so now, your government is clearly implicated in this and cannot be trusted to get to the bottom of what happened here. Will you promise today, particularly given this new information, to put all this information on the table through a thorough, independent investigation?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The member walks through a litany of conspiracy theories in her mind and says, "Will

you lay this on the table?" It is on the table. It has been very public. With respect to the situation last week and MDS labs and the communities, we were very public about that. We put everything on the table as soon as we could. We wanted to get the medical officer of health on the table early so he could talk to the other medical officers of health. We offered up a briefing for the opposition critics to get that information on the table. The public information that you see about Paul Rhodes's salary is very public, and he declared the conflicts when they were there.

The situation doesn't have any hidden agenda here. There is no information missing. It has been very public. We've been very clear, forthright and sincere in responding to the question and putting the public information out there. So there's no need for that. Ask your questions. You're getting the answers. If you can't find any questions to implicate or incriminate the government, it's because there is nothing implicating or incriminating the government, because we're doing everything in full public light.

1420

Ms Churley: How in the world are we supposed to trust you and know that at this time, given all the information we have to date? You let 67 communities know at least 19 days, according to you, after your own ministry knew what was going on. How could this happen after Walkerton? You have closed down all the public labs for testing water in this province, and now no one is responsible for maintaining safe and clean drinking water in this province. All the testing is done now by private labs. The standards are set by the Standards Council of Canada. Accreditation is done by the labs themselves. None of this is working or this wouldn't have happened again. Yet what do you do? You spend close to a quarter of a million dollars on a PR consultant—a spin doctor. Will you put your own feeble and ineffective responses to this growing crisis, Minister, under the microscope by calling for a full, independent investigation?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think the crisis is in your mind, with great respect to the member opposite. You're suggesting to us that somehow this crisis occurred. The medical officer of health said the chances of any public health issues were near zilch. We put forward this information to give people information. It was you, the opposition, who ratcheted it up to a public crisis issue. It was never a public crisis. It was only a situation where we had to get this information out so we could have the public feel comfortable in knowing their water is being tested, and tested properly.

You keep making this private sector argument. Understand that Walkerton was a public utility with public employees. You're the government that withdrew funding to pay for water testing. You withdrew it and told municipalities, "Go find yourself a better deal." Two short years later, half of them were out in private labs finding a better deal. How you extricate yourself from the decision-making process is breathtaking. You've decided

you never lived before 1995, and most people in the province would have preferred you hadn't.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Education. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario retained Lang Research to conduct its third annual school-based survey. This research shows, among many other things, a 7% drop in music teachers in the year 2001-02. Several scientific reports conducted all over the world to study the links between music and learning have shown that the study of music enhances math and science skills, and as well contributes positively to a child's social development. Students who study music also tend to have lower drop-out rates. Given this, Minister, how could you, as a former teacher, permit such a loss of music teachers in the system?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'd be happy to respond to the member from the third party, who I understand made an interesting presentation on Saturday. In regard to the issue you have raised, I think you are well aware of the fact that this year, in response to the messages we heard from the people of Ontario and the educational community, since Premier Eves took over we have already invested an additional \$350 million in the boards of education in Ontario. We also increased the amount of flexible funding available per pupil from \$100 to \$200. I would just remind you that it is up to each board to make decisions as to how they would allocate their money.

Mr Marchese: It's an interesting response you give again to this kind of question, Minister. We have seen program reductions in special education of 31%. We have seen library reductions of 30%, ESL reductions of 15%, design and technology reductions of 7% and music reductions of 11%. We have fewer caretakers, fewer education assistants, fewer psychologists and less busing than ever before.

Here's my question to you, Minister: which programs, according to you, should boards cut some more in order to have more music teachers and more music programs in their boards? Which ones?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'd be interested—I'm not sure whose data you're using.

Mr Marchese: Which data are you using, Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'd like to know what data you're using. You're using all sorts of figures, and I guess I can pull all sorts of figures out of a hat or out of the air, or I can talk about real numbers. It's very difficult to respond to you when you're using some facts. I don't know what you're basing your information on.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, I have a document here which outlines the position

that each province took during negotiations on the softwood lumber tariffs. According to this document, Ontario made a number of proposals. Apparently, one of those proposals was that "future section 26 sustainable forestry licences would be awarded by competitive bidding."

I know you're aware that one of the conditions of holding a sustainable forestry licence is a commitment that is made by the company to regeneration of any area that's harvested. I know too that you're aware that in return for that commitment to regeneration, one of the benefits the company receives is a commitment of long-term tenure, typically up to 20 years, in order that they can realize some benefit from that commitment to regeneration.

Minister, I want you to tell me first of all, does Ontario support the competitive bidding process for forestry licences and, if so, how long would the tenure be in those bids and what commitments would have to be made to forest regeneration?

Hon Jerry J. Ouellette (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member opposite for my first question from the opposition. The softwood forest industry is of strong concern to all the province. It represents a lot of jobs in the north.

For these licences, yes, we agree there should be a competitive bid. You've asked for a long-term tenure, a commitment for each of the contracts. Those contracts come up at various times throughout the entire year and I can't tell you exactly that every one will be 20 years. There are various proposals that come forward, and we look at them to say whether they're 10 or 12 years, to see what cut plans are available on each of those sites.

Mrs McLeod: Minister, I have to tell you I asked my question to seek information and I'm alarmed by the lack of apparent recognition of the importance of long-term tenure. I would ask you to turn at some point and tell us what's going to happen under a competitive bidding process to the long-term tenure that's essential for forest regeneration.

I do, however, want to draw your attention to another of the proposals that caused me even more alarm when I read it, and that was that Ontario appears ready to affirm that there is no requirement for the tenure holder to process wood. I want to understand what's meant by that proposal. I assume it means that somebody other than the licence holder can process wood but there's still a requirement to do the processing here in Ontario. But I'm concerned about the open-endedness of this and I'm looking for assurance. I know, again, you know that the natural resources of this province—our mining industries, our forest industries—have created jobs and created wealth on the basis that we're not just hewers of wood and drawers of water; we require processing to be done here.

Minister, there's concern across northern Ontario about what a competitive process will do to smaller operators. My question for you today is whether or not you are prepared to let large companies export unprocessed lumber, because if you are prepared to do that,

we risk losing literally hundreds and hundreds of jobs. Will you tell us how you are going to guarantee the protection of forestry jobs across northern Ontario, and will you start by giving us an assurance that there will be no export of unprocessed lumber?

Hon Mr Ouellette: Thank you very much. The question was regarding the tenure of the wood on those sites. If you look at the sites, there are cut plans available for all the fibre that's in those particular areas. Those particular producers may not use the fibre that is in those cut plans and it becomes available for other users of the product, where one person has a cut site and cuts aspen or birch yet doesn't necessarily need the conifer within that area, so they would make it available to other producers as well and they transfer back and forth.

There are positions that have come forward regarding exporting of lumber in the province of Ontario, and we do get into trade agreements with other jurisdictions so that they'll get some of our fibre to make sure that we can get some of theirs back that we can process in Ontario. But remaining in Ontario is a key priority for the Ministry of Natural Resources.

ONTARIO NEW HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services and it relates to the Ontario New Home Warranty Program. Over the last number of months, I have had a growing number of my constituents and I've heard from other members in this Legislature as well who are receiving complaints from new home purchasers of shoddy and often serious structural defects in the construction of their homes. Many of these people become even more frustrated when they appeal to the Ontario New Home Warranty Program, which is there to protect the consumer. But unfortunately it seems that consumer protection is often not there.

I've convened public meetings with representatives of ONHWP, with representatives of the industry, and I brought it to the attention of the former minister. Unfortunately, the problems persist, and although specific issues are dealt with, I'm asking the minister today, what is he doing to ensure that the consumer protection mandate is delivered by this program?

1430

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I appreciate the question from the member for Oak Ridges, who certainly has worked very hard, especially on this particular issue, convening round tables in his riding and writing to the former minister, and likely myself in the future.

He asks a good question. We want to assure the member and members of this chamber that consumer protection forms the bricks and mortar of my ministry with respect to the Ontario New Home Warranty Program. We want to make sure that people buying a new home—young families, for example—have a right to be confi-

dent that they'll get a good-quality home when they make that kind of investment. Two recent studies of this program had generally positive reviews relative to it—in fact, about 90% of the complaints have been resolved between the buyer and the builder before being formally mediated.

Of course, we always have to do better. The member makes some good points on how we can do so. One example is a builder-rating service where people can find out how a builder they're considering purchasing from rates. They can call ONHWP directly at 1-800-668-0124 or at the Web site of www.newhome.on.ca to see how they rate.

Mr Klees: Minister, one of the complaints I continue to hear is that the ONHWP favours the builder, that often, even if ONHWP confirms that a particular defect is warrantable and orders repairs, the builder doesn't respond or responds in an unfavourable way. The complaint is that the program simply doesn't have enough teeth to deal with the issue. What specific changes, then, Minister, are you proposing or will you insist on, so that this program actually does protect the consumer rather than favour the builder in the process?

Hon Mr Hudak: Again, a very good point and well said. We want to make sure the warranty program is going to focus on the problem builders to make sure they make the repairs necessary, and in a timely fashion. There is a new program that is coming out of the warranty program called Project Simplify. It's an initiative to establish very clear and firm time frames for builders to resolve these outstanding warranty defects. It's going to focus on the small number of problem builders to make sure they will live up to the warranty obligations that the member asks. If the builder doesn't live up to those obligations, they'll face a number of penalties that ONHWP is currently working on to make sure we can assure homeowners they're going to have a good-quality home when they're making a purchase. By targeting these troublemakers, we hope to make a difference and help resolve some of the issues the member brings forward in the Legislature today.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, I've written to your government a number of times regarding the crumbling conditions of many of our schools in the city of Hamilton. You sounded encouraging on Thursday in media comments that you made to look at the issue, then unfortunately on Friday your ministry officials told the board of education that there's no money coming for emergency funding to repair some of the schools that are really in a serious, serious crisis when it comes to repairs.

We have Hillsdale school in my riding. Two of the rooms are closed and a third one may be closed right now as a result of the rain. They have 10 buckets set up in the classrooms, they've had to move computers out of rooms and have had to shut down electrical panels. This is a

school in Ontario in the year 2002, not some Third World country. We should not have these conditions here.

Under your watch, Minister, this is continuing to happen. I'm going to ask you clearly: why did your ministry say no to the Hamilton board of education on Friday for emergency repairs to this school and others that are in such a state of crisis that the kids cannot be in the classroom during the day?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Again, we have a situation where some of the information that is being presented is not quite as it is being presented.

But let me say first and foremost, our government is very concerned about the state of accommodation in the province of Ontario and that's why we have made significant investment in new schools in order to ensure that high-quality school facilities are available for all students. We believe that students should be educated in a clean, safe and comfortable environment. We are providing this year, 2002-03, funding for nine boards to address the issue of schools that are too costly to repair. Eight facilities are going to be rebuilt. This is a very significant investment.

I can speak to the Hillsdale situation. I indicated to you that I was concerned about the situation as you described it to me. I did ask ministry staff to meet with the board. I understand the board is going to be repairing that school once the children go for summer recess, and I understand—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Supplementary.

Mr Agostino: The reality is that particular roof is \$250,000. The board has made it clear. They have said, "If we have to fix that roof, then it's going to be another roof, another boiler, a set of windows in other schools. It can't be done."

The reality is, they need more money, Minister. The board has identified to you \$13 million in urgent repairs. These are things like boilers, roofs, windows that have been broken and are boarded up; they haven't been fixed. These are not luxury items. These are the most essential services to have a basic, safe learning environment for kids. So the \$250,000 that's going to fix one roof is only a small part of that. They need \$13 million today, simply for urgent repairs.

It's not just Hamilton. Halton faces the same situation. The Halton board has identified needs that they have: broken windows that can't be fixed, roofs and boilers. Again, Minister, as much as you talk about what you've done across the province, the reality is, as of last week, there were kids in schools in my riding sitting in classrooms who, when it was raining, had to be moved out, and buckets replaced their desks in that classroom.

I ask you again today: will you commit to ensure that the Hamilton board of education will receive the \$13 million that it has identified to you in emergency, essential, urgent repairs that are needed to help our crumbling schools? Unfortunately, low-income kids in poor neighbourhoods are bearing the brunt of your cuts. Will you commit to—

The Speaker: The member's time is up. Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, there's a lot of rhetoric there. We take very seriously the issue of providing safe accommodation for schools. Ministry staff have dealt with the staff of the Hamilton board. There are two classrooms that are affected. The repairs are going to be undertaken this summer.

With respect to the broader question you asked about what we do about schools in the province that are in need of repair, as the member full well knows, we are developing at the present time a strategy to address this issue. We've also asked Dr Rozanski to take a look at this issue as to making sure we can provide the appropriate level of funding. We are very concerned, and we've already announced just recently that we will be constructing eight new schools for schools that were simply too prohibitive to repair. We care about the kids, and we care about providing them with safe, comfortable accommodation.

KIDS' FISHING DAY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources, his second question today. On Saturday, June 8, I had the pleasure of being part of the second annual Kids' Fishing Day. Minister, I want to commend you for the effort you put in in organizing this event at Heber Downs Conservation Area. The event gives great opportunity for children and young families who may not often get the chance to participate in the outdoors way of life—fishing and just the general experience.

Minister, I was impressed with almost 700 people who had that experience at that event that you arranged. In my mind, it was a great success, judging by how many kids and their families were able to pick up a fishing rod, fish for a while, take a guided nature tour or simply have a hot dog and a drink. I thank you on their behalf.

I noticed that many outdoor organizations contributed their time and funds to make this year's Kids' Fishing Day, organizations like the Durham police services, Eastview Boys and Girls Club, Union Rod and Gun Club, Orono Fish and Gun Club from my area, and Shimano, of course.

Minister, could you please elaborate—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the member's time is up. Minister?

1440

Hon Jerry J. Ouellette (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member for Durham not only for the question but for actually participating in the event, because it was a great success.

On the 8th we were able to provide kids from around the region the opportunity to take part in many outdoor activities, which included fishing. Some other activities included the MNR dog demonstration; a nature trail hike where the kids had an opportunity to experience a lot of the trees, fauna, the bird sounds etc; and we also had Ducks Unlimited out, which ran a station to do duck identification and pond identification.

It was a co-operative effort that would not have been possible without our valuable volunteers and the support of organizations. There were over 100 volunteers on that particular day. Among the organizations that were already mentioned, I would like to thank the Pickering Rod and Gun Club for the lunch facilities, the Oshawa Community Health Centre, the parental department of the regional municipality of Durham, along with Simcoe Hall Settlement House, CLOCA, and of course the sponsoring agency, the Central Ontario Big Game Association.

For all those anglers out there, there are still lots of fish left in the pond.

Mr O'Toole: I know it was a catch-and-release day, so naturally there are a lot left.

I can certainly tell you that I enjoyed the day myself, but I'm not given to too much fishing outside of this place. I commend you for taking on such a very worthwhile initiative of working with children and giving them an appreciation and an understanding of outdoor activities and the recreational opportunities not just in Durham but indeed across this great province.

I understand that your ministry is involved in providing programs for youth in a number of areas. Perhaps you can tell the House today, those who are still listening, some of the important programs that your ministry puts on for the province of Ontario.

Hon Mr Ouellette: We've launched several excellent initiatives for youth across the province that not only provide work opportunities but also get youth acquainted with the great outdoors.

My ministry has six employment programs that I encourage young people to take advantage of. In 2001 there were thousands of jobs created for youth in Ontario. We have offered programs for young people for more than 55 years. Our longest-running program is the Ontario Ranger program. Along with this, there are the Ontario Stewardship Rangers, the internship programs, the co-op programs, the summer experience programs and the Ontario-Quebec exchange program.

These opportunities provide youth with on-the-job training, learning prospects, work skills, experience in natural resource management and a chance to work on our community-based resource projects, all the while helping to keep our natural ecosystems healthy.

The Ministry of Natural Resources is investing in Ontario's youth. They are the future of the province. I'm very proud that we can spearhead these initiatives for the youth of today and I look forward to continuing these for the youth of tomorrow.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Health. Sault Ste Marie is in a medical crisis and it is getting worse. We only have two and a half full-time anesthesiologists, when we need seven. Surgeries are being cancelled. As more family doctors retire or leave the city, we're going to lose surgical assist-

ants. According to Dr Willett, interim medical director for the surgical program in the Soo, this will mean the cancellation of emergency surgery. If you don't take immediate action, the lives of the people in Sault Ste Marie could be at risk.

Minister, will you commit today to making the real changes necessary to get the doctors we need in Sault Ste Marie?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I certainly can advise this chamber that we have been in constant contact with hospital and civic officials in Sault Ste Marie, dealing with their particular needs and aspirations in this area.

As the honourable member may be aware, we have a number of programs, a number of inducements to practise in underserviced areas: we remove caps; we pay for tuition; we top up salaries. Of course, the new northern medical school will be of great benefit to Sault Ste Marie, as it will to various communities throughout the north. These are programs that are ongoing.

I can assure the honourable member that the needs and wishes of residents of the Soo, including patients in the Sault Ste Marie area, are on our minds.

Mr Martin: The patients of Sault Ste Marie may be on your mind, and you indeed may be having contact with officials up there, but not only is nothing changing; the situation is getting worse.

Current government incentives cannot attract locums to cover the four and a half anaesthesiologists we need. Our community is already short 10 family doctors. It will be 10 years before we receive any doctors from the northern medical school, and we need doctors now. Communities across Ontario are facing doctor shortages. Sault Ste Marie's shortage is critical. What is clearly needed is a graduated scale of needs assessment and doctor incentives. Your one-size-fits-all solution just isn't working. Will you commit today to implementing a graduated scale of assessment, particularly for my community?

Hon Mr Clement: I am trying to work with the honourable member, but let me quote something that might be of interest to him. Here's the quote: "I was part of a political consensus that proved to be wrong. We all realize now that there were some mistakes made." Who said that? Bob Rae said it about doctor shortages, because it was the NDP government that came along and cut the number of medical spaces by 30%, and Bob Rae now admits he was wrong. When will you admit you were wrong? That's what we want to know on this side of the House.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is to the Chair of Management Board. The Ontario Provincial Police needs five updated OPP communication centres. So far, three of them have been in place for some time, all of them in Conservative ridings. In northwestern Ontario and eastern Ontario, officers and citizens continue to be served by 25-year-old to 30-year-

old technology. That speaks volumes about your government's lack of commitment to safety.

You have an almost-new closed OPP building in the Quinte area. Both the OPP and Bell Sympatico have recommended it as the ideal site. It's on a major highway and it's already paid for. The rent is zero dollars per year for a building you already own. You tried three years ago to put one in Lanark county. You weren't successful and you're trying it again. You're obsessed with Lanark county. This is a sterling example of perseverance.

The rent, if it is built in Lanark county, will be \$250,000 a year or more. When you were Solicitor General, you pledged you would adhere to best business practices and best efficiency for the OPP. You will never buy something as cheap as something you already own. Minister Turnbull verbally committed to a public process for—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I know it's good, but I'm afraid the member's time is up. Minister?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): First of all, I do like Lanark county.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: As my colleagues say, we like Lanark county. Nothing has changed in terms of our perspective. We still believe in best business practices. That's what we will adhere to.

Mr Parsons: This selection process has just a whiff of what used to be called "pork-barrelling." You have an existing building that meets all the criteria. Your Perth ad is clearly tailored to one area and maybe one person within five kilometres of Perth or Smiths Falls who is located on and has access to county road 43. Call centres can go anywhere, but it appears they can only go anywhere if it's a Conservative riding. Limiting your search to one location is bad finances and bad for public safety and security.

Your friends have done well since 1995. It is now time for the people of Ontario to do well. I challenge you to make public the OPP report and I ask you to guarantee that the local decision will be in the best interests of the public, not in the best interests of your party.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I suppose the word out on the streets federally about consultants is exciting the member over there. I presume we're not going to use the consultant. What we will do, though, is we will adhere to best business practices. We've said that consistently throughout. That will be what the decision's based on: best business practices. That is not in any way ambiguous.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for my friend the Minister of Transportation and it's about improving public safety at intersections by effectively enforcing the law and putting a stop to those who would imperil the safety of pedestrians and other motorists by running red lights.

Through the red light camera pilot project, the government enables six municipalities in Ontario to operate red light cameras at intersections, snap a picture of the offending vehicle's licence plate and lay charges based on that evidence. I understand there are also stepped-up police enforcement sites as part of this pilot study.

This pilot project has been up and running in Waterloo region since November 2000. I would ask the minister if he could update this House on the effectiveness of this important pilot project across the province.

1450

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): I want to thank the member for his interest as he's very much interested in highway safety matters.

Dealing with red light running requires a multi-faceted approach that includes public awareness, enforcement and tough penalties for breaking the law. Our government has done some of those things since we arrived here in 1995. Number one, in 1997 we raised the fines for red light running. In 2000, we proclaimed legislation to enable municipalities to operate red light cameras for a two-year period.

This pilot project requires municipalities to conduct increased police enforcement at other intersections as well as where the red light cameras are located. We are working with municipalities to have a report on the effectiveness of this, and we hope that report will be complete in the not-too-far distant future.

Mr Arnott: I want to thank the minister for that answer and inform him that the regional council of Waterloo region, their staff and police are to be credited for their good work as partners in this pilot project. They've advised me the project is scheduled to terminate in November 2002. Without hesitation I support their resolution requesting that the government extend the project for another two years.

I've also received word from the Canadian Automobile Association. I received a letter from Anne Becker, their president and CEO for midwestern Ontario, asking me to support the two-year extension, which I do.

My supplementary question to the minister is: will the government extend the red light camera pilot project for two more years?

Hon Mr Sterling: The red light project was contained in legislation and therefore will require an amendment in this Legislature prior to November of 2002 in order for this project to continue on. I've talked to several of the municipalities and stakeholders who are interested in this, including the Canadian Automobile Association, which, as you know, is always concerned with automobile safety.

Five of the six municipalities that are presently undertaking this project have requested an extension. I am looking very favourably toward doing this but I want to continue my consultations. I would expect that the opposition and the government benches, if in fact those consultations are successful, would support a piece of legislation here in this House and would pass it with due haste.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, the Greater Essex County District School Board has passed a budget that avoids a deficit this year. In order to do this, however, deep cuts had to be made. The board is taking nearly \$1 million from its \$2-million reserve fund to avoid a deficit. The board is spending \$4.5 million less on special education than it should be. This is cause for alarm.

Minister, you've systematically underfunded the education system, leaving school boards across the province, but most acutely boards in the Essex-Windsor area, between the proverbial rock and a hard place. School boards don't have the money to carry out their mandates to provide a quality learning experience to students under all circumstances and of all abilities, and our kids are suffering.

Minister, will you admit that your draconian anti-deficit legislation has allowed special education to be shortchanged?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I appreciate the concern the member opposite has displayed for the students in his riding, but I think the member also needs to recognize we have been very responsive to the concerns we have heard in the province of Ontario.

I would remind you again that, in the very first weeks of the new administration under Premier Eves, we have made available, I have announced, an additional \$440 million to go to school boards for funding for textbooks, for early math and for early literacy. We've also, ahead of time, indicated we're going to review the funding formula. We've asked Dr Rozanski to do that review. So we have listened to the concerns we have heard, we have addressed them and we will continue to make sure the students in this province continue to receive the services and support they need.

Mr Crozier: Minister, if I'm going to believe you or the Essex county school board, I'm afraid I'm coming down on this one with the Essex county school board. This isn't simply a numbers game; this is a safety issue. Staff and students are being put at risk because schools are not given the necessary tools to cope with the kids' behavioural disorders and developmental disabilities. These children are not getting the assistance and supervision they require, because the board only has \$30.4 million to spend on special education when it needs \$35 million.

Funding for children with the most critical needs has been frozen at 1998 levels despite inflation and increased enrolment. Thirty more staff are needed to help address the problem, but they can only afford five. Clearly this is a resource allocation problem. Minister, will you commit today to special education and guarantee that no Ontario child who needs it will go without?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We have made a very strong commitment to special education. In fact, it was highlighted in the throne speech that was delivered a few short weeks ago. If you remember, prior to 1998 there

was grave inequality as far as delivery of services and assessment across the province were concerned. Our government vowed to end that. We vowed to make sure that no matter where you lived, which school board you attended, which school you attended, there would be equal access, and the new funding does give equal access.

I'm also pleased to say that we have increased funding for special needs by 17% since 1998. We have kept our promise to protect funding for vulnerable children. This year we allocated \$1.37 billion, the highest number that has ever been set aside in the history of this province, for children with special needs. We are providing funding. But I would agree with you: there is always more that needs to be done.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the associate minister responsible for rural affairs. I recently attended the 2002 eastern Ontario trails conference in Belleville, where I had the pleasure of participating in the announcement that the Eves government is investing some \$275,000 to help increase multi-use trail activity and tourism in eastern Ontario. This is one project that was approved in the \$200-million rural economic development program, which is a key component of our government's Ontario small town and rural development initiative, better known as OSTAR-RED.

Minister, I know my constituents are very interested in the Ernie Eves government's initiative. Could you please bring my constituents up to date on what has been accomplished?

Hon Brian Coburn (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the hard-working member from Northumberland for the question. As you know, rural Ontario has strong economies that are based on vibrant communities and healthy social and environmental climates, and we want to build on those strengths. That's why our government has committed \$200 million over five years under the rural economic development program. It's a cost-sharing initiative designed to address barriers to economic growth. These barriers to economic growth are designated by the folks right in those communities, the people who face them on a day-to-day basis.

Our goal at the end of the day is to have a diversified climate, long-term jobs, increased investment, strong partnerships and alliances, and new products and new markets for investment in rural Ontario. We will reach these goals by working with our partners in rural Ontario, making sure they have the tools and resources in place to identify new opportunities and to take advantage of those economic opportunities.

It's still early in the program, but already we've—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the associate minister's time is up.

1500

Mr Galt: Minister, OSTAR and OSTAR-RED have indeed been very successful for infrastructure and rural

economic development. That was as a result of the Minister of Finance, Ernie Eves, back in the 2000 budget, who came through with the \$600 million for this, that was based on the interim report of the Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal, which I had the fortune to chair and submit back in April 2000.

Minister, people from my riding are very interested in what types of ideas they should be putting forward. Could you also explain the type of projects that have already been approved and how they will benefit rural Ontario?

Hon Mr Coburn: That's certainly the beauty of this particular program. There's lots of room for creative ideas. Just to give you a few examples, some of the ideas are: establish Internet terminals at major tourism destinations to help market local or regional tourism attractions or accommodations for visitors; explore new technologies and processes for non-traditional uses of agricultural commodities and waste products; and feasibility studies for business attractions and retention projects. This program is designed to be flexible, because we know that one size does not fit all in rural Ontario. We recognize that there are unique features in each of our communities, and this is a program that is designed to recognize that as well.

I just recently had the privilege of announcing the dynamic new program called "A business-to-business road map for prosperity: toward a high-tech future in eastern Ontario." This will provide an opportunity for about 400 companies to take advantage of new initiatives and the linkages network.

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): My question is to the Minister of Northern Development, the lead minister in northern Ontario. As you know—

Interjections.

Mr Bisson: Glad to be of assistance.

As you know, Ontario softwood producers are now paying a tax equal to 22%, in some cases, of the value of their shipments to the United States market. Tembec operations, in my riding alone, has seen some 50 jobs lost since December due to reorganization that they're having to undergo because of adjustment to this tax. There are at least 150 more jobs that are at stake in regard to how they're going to reorganize to be able to offset this particular tax.

My question is a very simple one, Minister: as our lead minister, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, what is your plan in order to be able to avert a lot of these job losses that we're going to see in the softwood lumber industry in northern Ontario?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): The honourable member may know, as was widely publicized in the northern press, both newspaper and radio last week, that I and the honourable Minister of Natural Resources have co-signed a letter, joining the people of northern Ontario and calling upon

the federal government to redouble its efforts to solve this softwood lumber dispute. It's a huge penalty that Ontarians in the north are paying as a result of a trade dispute between our two countries. It's unfortunate; it's cyclical; it's historical; it has happened many times over the last 40 years that this tax, and that's what it is by any other name—it's a tax imposed by the Americans, has been imposed on us here in Ontario and, indeed, in other parts of Canada. It's an unfortunate dispute that needs a permanent solution. This government has called upon the federal government to work together and all provinces to work to solve this irritant between our countries which is serving none of our citizens very well, on either side of the border.

Mr Bisson: I feel a lot better now that the letter's gone out. Anyway, we welcome it because it is a serious initiative.

Minister, my specific question to you was: what are you going to do in order to be able to offset the job losses that we're seeing as companies adjust to paying this tax? For example, one of the issues in northeastern Ontario is what's happening with roundwood. There are a number of areas of northeastern Ontario where roundwood is not being sent to Ontario plants and instead is being sent over to the province of Quebec. In fact, one such plant is the plant in Kirkland Lake that was actually scheduled to go down, but now, because of the efforts of the IWA, myself and others at Tembec, we've managed to be able to turn that around—to source wood that would normally go to Quebec into that plant to keep it open.

So my question to you is simply this: will you, Minister, commit to making sure that no roundwood in the province of Ontario is going to be processed outside of this province, so those jobs can be kept for the people of northern Ontario?

Hon Mr Wilson: The honourable member knows that the government is making efforts on every front to keep jobs in Ontario, where jobs and the economy, cabinet, and everything we do is to protect jobs and hundreds of thousands of new jobs. In spite of an out-migration of people in the north, the number of jobs in the north under this government has increased significantly. We'll keep that record and we'll keep building on that record.

There are 101 Liberal MPs, out of 103, in this province, who do nothing. This should be the number one issue between our two countries. Mr Chrétien goes down to the United States and cozies up to President Bush, we joined them in warfare, we lost four of our soldiers as a result of war, and yet we cannot—because the federal government will not put enough resources, talent and force on the United States—resolve this issue between our two countries.

It needs to be resolved. We've done our part. It's time the federal Liberals did their part with the Americans.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): My question is to the Minister of Transportation.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We'll just take a minute and wait. There he is.

The member for Chatham-Kent Essex.

Mr Hoy: You know that my private member's bill, Bill 112, passed second reading. This is a bill to protect children while on school buses.

There are 810,000 children who ride our school buses daily on 16,000 buses. The problem with the current law in identifying people who pass a school bus illegally in this province is that the school bus driver must identify the offending driver by face. My bill would allow for vehicle liability.

I was interested in your response on red light cameras earlier today. The government currently uses vehicle liability for parking violations, red light cameras and collecting tolls on Highway 407. You use it to collect money.

Will you give an undertaking in the House today that you will request of the government House leader that Bill 112 go to the justice and social policy committee, as referred by this House, and that it return immediately to this House for third reading?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): I think the justice committee should have some hearings to hear from the public to determine whether or not this bill should go ahead.

The honourable member opposite actually asked for the bill to go there. He could have referred it to the committee of the whole House and therefore perhaps would have had a speedier passage of the bill.

The concern I have is that several groups have stated their opposition to this bill. I wanted to give them the opportunity to come before the committee and state that opposition. Then members of this Legislature will hear both sides of the debate, and we can make an informed decision.

I think the bill has some merit. That's why I want the public to have their opportunity to put their positions forward before we decide to go ahead with it.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): On a point of order, Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 37(a), I wish to advise you of my dissatisfaction with the response of the Minister of Education to my question on the loss of music teachers in our elementary schools.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That's fine. Could the member please file the appropriate paperwork with the table?

PETITIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have letters in the form of a petition which reads as follows:

"I'm a parent at Shaughnessy public school. I'm very concerned about the drastic impact of funding cuts to the Toronto school system. The current provincial funding formula does not meet the real needs of students in the Toronto District School Board. If the government does not make substantial changes to the funding formula, my school will lose programs and services and my child's education will suffer.

"The government has the opportunity to address the inadequacy of the provincial funding formula. Urgent action is required. We strongly ask that you: (1) immediately review the funding formula; (2) maintain current funding levels 2001-02 until the review is complete; (3) give serious consideration to the need-to-succeed budget; (4) put our children first by providing the level of funding for the public education system that our children deserve and need.

"Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter."

It is signed by 118 parents at Shaughnessy Public School. I want to thank Julie Hogg, vice-chair of the school council, for forwarding this. I hope we will have an adequate answer from the minister to the legitimate concerns of these parents.

1510

HIGHWAY 522

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I have a petition here to the Parliament of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We, the taxpayers, members of the communities and the people who have to travel along Highway 522 in the district of Parry Sound want to bring to your attention the poor condition of Highway 522."

I'm pleased to sign this on their behalf.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Conservative government hastily amalgamated Niagara's ambulance dispatch services into the Hamilton Central Ambulance Communication Centre;

"Whereas an independent review of Hamilton Central Ambulance Communication Centre found several major shortcomings, including inexperienced dispatchers, high call volume and out-of-date equipment, hindering the dispatch of ambulances in Niagara and in other parts of the province;

"Whereas poor training of central ambulance communication centre dispatchers by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has led to improper emergency coding, resource misallocation and waste and increased wait times for those requiring ambulance services;

"Whereas the Central Ambulance Communication Centre dispatchers are handling 1,300 more calls a year than recommended by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"Whereas these shortcomings in ambulance service restructuring are putting lives at risk in Niagara, Hamilton and throughout the province;

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has been in possession of the independent review since October 31, 2001, which provides recommendations to greatly improve ambulance dispatch services in Niagara and Hamilton;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately act upon recommendations presented in the independent review of the Central Ambulance Communication Centre and eliminate the grievous imperfections which are placing our citizens at risk."

I affix my signature; I am in complete agreement.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have a petition signed by literally thousands of people from northeastern Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas people with disabilities who rely on the Ontario disability support program payments are facing rising costs, and

"Whereas people unable to work because of serious disabilities have had no increase in support since 1995, and

"Whereas with loss of rent controls their rents have skyrocketed, placing huge financial strains on many ODSP recipients,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to bring fairness to the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, by amending it to provide for regulations requiring annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support programs," as were suggested in Mr Tony Martin's bill.

I affix my signature to that petition.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition signed by 46 people:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

WATER QUALITY

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's families need to know that their water is safe;

"Whereas Ernie Eves is not protecting the drinking water of Ontario families;

"Whereas Ernie Eves recklessly cut the Ministry of the Environment budget by over 40% and laid off one third of the staff;

"Whereas Ernie Eves's cuts to the Ministry of Environment continue to put our drinking water at risk, despite the tragic deaths at Walkerton;

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have outlined an emergency safe water drinking plan that includes hiring an additional 100 environment inspectors, drinking water experts and enforcement officers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that Ontario's drinking water is safe for our families and to immediately implement Dalton McGuinty's safe water action plan."

I concur with this and I will affix my signature to it.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have yet again more petitions on the Ontarians with disabilities program, this time from the residents of 217 Pine Street North, with whom I met on Friday. It reads as follows:

"Whereas people with disabilities who rely on the Ontario disability support program payments are facing rising costs, and

"Whereas people unable to work because of serious disabilities have had no increase in support since 1995, and

"Whereas with loss of rent controls their rents have skyrocketed, placing huge financial strains on many ODSP recipients,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to bring fairness to the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, by amending it to provide for regulations requiring annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support programs."

The residents of 217 Pine North asked me to bring that petition on their behalf here today.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition signed by 61 people:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

SERVICES DE SANTÉ POUR ENFANTS

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): Une autre fois je viens à la rescousse de l'hôpital pour enfants, au nom des commettants et commettantes d'Ottawa-Vanier :

« Attendu que le gouvernement conservateur planifie la fermeture du service de chirurgie cardiaque à l'Hôpital pour enfants de l'est de l'Ontario ;

"Whereas the government plans to centralize all cardiac services for children in Toronto;

« Attendu que la chirurgie cardiaque à l'HEEO est un service essentiel pour les enfants de l'est de l'Ontario et pour tous les enfants francophones de toute la province ;

"Whereas the lives of children may be at risk if forced to travel to Toronto for cardiac care;

« Attendu que les enfants et leur famille se verront imposer des dépenses et des soucis inutiles s'ils doivent se rendre à Toronto pour obtenir des services cardiaques ;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the government halt immediately its decision to close cardiac surgery services at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa."

I do sign this petition.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I've got a petition here which reads:

« To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas animal abusers are not currently subject to any provincial penalties;

"Whereas it is currently impossible for a judge to ban puppy and kitten mill operators from owning animals for the rest of their lives;

"Whereas Ontario SPCA investigators need to act on instances of cruelty to animals in a more timely fashion, thereby lessening the animals' suffering;

"Whereas it is currently not an offence to train an animal to fight another animal;

"Whereas Ontario's animals are not adequately protected by the current law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the amendments to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act developed by a

governmental working group (which included the Ontario SPCA) and submitted to the office of the Solicitor General of Ontario in June of 2001, so that the above conditions, among others, will be properly addressed."

I will affix my signature and give it to Jordan to give to the desk.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition signed by 47 people:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition entitled "Fair Increases Now." It's especially germane, given that today, June 17, is the fourth anniversary of the misnamed Tenant Protection Act.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the number of tenants receiving above-guideline rent increase is growing exponentially; and

"Whereas many of these increases are for increases in utility costs, many of which have gone down since; and

"Whereas tenants should not have to pay for improvements forever, even when the costs have been realized by these rent increases; and

"Whereas the" so-called "Tenant Protection Act does not give a tenant relief due to the costs being realized or a drop in utility costs; and

"Whereas tenants should not be receiving rent increases where there are" outstanding "work orders issued for the building;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to immediately pass MPP David Caplan's Bill 134 entitled the Fair Rent Increases Act at the earliest possible opportunity so that tenants can get relief from above-guideline" rent "increases once the bills have been paid."

I wholeheartedly endorse the petition and I have affixed my signature to it.

1520

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition that has been signed by 64 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas animal abusers are not currently subject to any provincial penalties;

"Whereas it is currently impossible for a judge to ban puppy and kitten mill operators from owning animals for the rest of their lives; and

"Whereas Ontario SPCA investigators need to act on instances of cruelty to animals in a more timely fashion, thereby lessening the animals' suffering;

"Whereas it is currently not an offence to train an animal to fight another animal; and

"Whereas Ontario's animals are not adequately protected by the current law;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the amendments to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act developed by a governmental working group (which included the Ontario SPCA) and submitted to the office of the Solicitor General of Ontario in June of 2001, so that the" current "above conditions, among others, will be properly addressed."

I affix my signature. I am in complete agreement.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I have yet another petition, this time from the community of Kapuskasing in regard to ODSP benefits. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas people with disabilities who rely on the Ontario disability support program payments are facing rising costs, and

"Whereas people unable to work because of serious disabilities have had no increase in support since 1995, and

"Whereas with loss of rent controls their rents have skyrocketed, placing huge financial strains on many ODSP recipients,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to bring fairness to the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, by amending it to provide for regulations requiring annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support" payments.

On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd also like you to check if there's quorum here in the Legislature at this point.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Will the table check, please?

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Speaker: Call in the members.

The Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Speaker: Further petitions?

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition signed by 32 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to the agreement of the House earlier today, these proceedings are suspended until 4 pm. At 3:55 pm I will cause the bells to ring to summon members to the House.

The House recessed from 1525 to 1600.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2002 ONTARIO BUDGET

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by Mr Eves, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): With the indulgence of the House, the pages will now deliver the budget. Have all members received their copies?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I am pleased to table today Ontario's fourth consecutive balanced budget. This government is keeping its promise of growth and prosperity for Ontario.

On February 14, 1967, the first Ontario Treasurer to come from Exeter, the Honourable Charles Mac-

Naughton, described the challenge facing all provincial Treasurers. In preparing a budget he said, "We tread the slender tightrope between the reasonable expectations of our people for government services and a constant awareness of the burdens on the taxpayer."

Thirty-five years later, the second Treasurer to come from Exeter has developed a keen appreciation in the last few weeks for the meaning of those words.

While much has changed since 1967, the essential task of preparing a budget remains the same. A keen sense of balance is still required between meeting today's needs and investing for tomorrow's challenges.

Budgets are also about values and choices. As I learned growing up in Exeter, values come from families and communities—from the people who live those values with quiet strength and perseverance—values such as setting personal goals, and working hard to achieve them; pursuing education as the key to opportunity; respecting the rights of others while accepting our own responsibilities; valuing and protecting our natural heritage and environment; standing up for what is right; answering the call of your community through public service, volunteerism and personal commitment; and sharing the fruits of your own success with those who need help.

These are the values that built this province, that made it strong. They are the same values that motivated our government when we promised to return Ontario to prosperity in 1995. While our predecessors preferred to carve up a shrinking pie into ever-smaller pieces, the Common Sense Revolution chose to make the pie bigger. We placed this province on the path to increased growth.

The people of Ontario know that prosperity is a virtuous circle: that a growing economy provides more and better jobs, more disposable income and more revenue to invest in our future, in turn renewing economic growth and creating even more prosperity.

This government has kept its promises by cutting taxes to create jobs, by removing barriers to growth, by balancing the budget and paying down debt, by helping people off welfare and into jobs, by strengthening our universally accessible health care system, by making significant infrastructure investments for the future and, most importantly, by setting higher standards in education to equip our students with the knowledge and skills they need for success in the global economy. Mr Speaker, the evidence is clear: because we put the right fundamentals in place, our plan for prosperity is working.

The numbers that chart our progress are impressive, but the real improvements are in people's everyday lives: the young family buying their first home, the recent graduate getting a great job, businesses expanding and creating new jobs at home and finding success in foreign markets, the opportunities that people have today that didn't exist in 1995.

This was the vision of the Common Sense Revolution, that Ontario could become the best place to live, work and raise a family. And while we've accomplished much, there is clearly more to do. That's why we're sticking with the fundamentals of our plan, and this budget is

about how we intend to do that, based on what the people of Ontario told us needs to be done.

While the Minister of Finance takes ultimate responsibility for the budget, it is truly the work of many capable hands.

I want to thank Premier Ernie Eves for his clear vision and leadership. We owe much of today's prosperity to the bold and courageous steps he took as finance minister to restore confidence and growth in this province.

I am also indebted to my caucus colleagues, especially my immediate predecessor, Minister Jim Flaherty; to the Chair of Management Board, David Tsubouchi; to my parliamentary assistants Marcel Beaubien and Ted Chudleigh; and to the many members of the Legislature who have offered advice the past few weeks.

1610

As I've learned in the last 64 days, the Ministry of Finance is staffed by highly capable and professional people. They are led most effectively by my Deputy Minister, Bob Christie. He and his hard-working staff have been most helpful to a new minister and I am deeply grateful for their advice.

I would like to thank my personal staff, whose long hours of dedication are ably led by my chief of staff, Scott Andison.

Finally, I want to thank my husband, Derek Nelson, for his patience, his understanding and, most importantly, for his support.

First I'd like to deal with the fiscal challenge that we face this year.

Because Ontario's economy is open and trade-oriented, the global economy of 2001 is our starting point.

During the past year, our largest trading partner, the United States, experienced a sharp economic slowdown. US real economic growth slowed from 4% in 2000 to 1% in 2001.

Key building blocks of our economy—most notably the automobile and telecommunication equipment sectors—were hard hit by the sharp reduction in the demand in world markets and by the terrorist attacks in the United States. Exports fell more last year than in the recession year of 1991.

The result was that after four consecutive years of annual real growth exceeding 5%, Ontario's economy grew by just 1% in 2001.

In last year's budget, growth was forecast to slow, and we provided a fiscal plan that responded to this situation.

After September 11, we took further action to restore consumer confidence by accelerating tax cuts. Coupled with prudent management and the use of our \$1-billion reserve, we balanced the budget last year, for the third year in a row.

We were also able to make an additional \$127-million payment on Ontario's accumulated debt. This brings our total debt repayment to \$4.2 billion, almost 85% of the target that we set for ourselves to reduce the mortgage left by past governments.

Ontario's economy is rebounding sharply, but our revenues this year are still reflecting last year's slowdown.

The fall in exports and the competitive pressures that led to lower prices caused corporate profits in Ontario to fall nearly 13% in 2001, with little expectation of an upturn this year.

Lower economic growth last year and continued weak stock markets mean that our largest tax source, the personal income tax, is forecast to decline slightly in 2002-03.

There is another important factor in Ontario's fiscal challenge: some specific federal policies.

First, Ontario and all provinces are being shortchanged because the Canada health and social transfer, the CHST, has failed to keep up with rapidly rising health care costs, the expansion of post-secondary education and the need to protect the most vulnerable people in our society.

Second, continued federal overtaxing of Ontario workers and employers through excessive employment insurance premiums heavily burdens Ontario's growth and, in effect, penalizes this province for having a strong economy.

What this means is that while Ottawa continues to collect more taxpayers' money than it requires to meet its obligations, the provinces continue to struggle with the growing costs of the programs that mean the most to our people: health care and education.

This is not a healthy situation for Canada. Ontario is the largest driver of national economic growth. We recognize and accept our responsibility to make significant contributions to equalization payments to help other provinces. But if our growth is slowed by federal policies and decisions, the impacts are felt across the country.

The cumulative impact of all of these factors presented us with a challenge: to develop a balanced fiscal plan in the face of little revenue growth and growing program needs. In the face of this challenge, we know that the sound path we have established over the past seven years is still the right one to follow. This government will continue to make choices that encourage prosperity.

Our government has pursued an aggressive tax cut plan for one very simple reason: tax cuts work. We will continue with tax cuts because we want to take even more steps to promote prosperity in this province. Over the coming months, I will be seeking advice with a view to announcing in next year's budget a new multi-year tax reduction plan, including the next step toward eliminating the capital tax and Ontario's income tax surtax.

In the meantime, because of our short-term fiscal situation, I will introduce legislation to delay, for one year only, the current planned reductions in personal and corporate income tax and the next step of the equity in education tax credit.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Sorry for the interruption, Minister. Order. There is a tradition of allowing the Minister of Finance to give the speech. Sorry, Minister.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

We will also delay by one year planned reductions in education property tax rates.

Because nearly half of new jobs are created by small business, we will continue the tax cuts for small businesses as currently scheduled. Also, to help people remain in the workforce, I propose to remove another 50,000 modest-income people from the income tax rolls through enrichment of the Ontario tax reduction program.

This means 745,000 Ontarians will not pay any provincial income tax whatsoever. Yet these same Ontarians will continue to pay an estimated \$375 million a year in federal income tax. We believe taking modest-income Ontarians off the tax rolls is the right thing to do. We encourage the federal government to follow our lead.

Tobacco taxation is an important part of our efforts to discourage young people from smoking and to provide more resources for health care. I propose to increase tobacco tax by \$5 per carton, in partnership with the federal government and concurrent with actions by the governments of Quebec and New Brunswick. I also propose to amend the structure of tobacco taxation by exempting tobacco products under the Retail Sales Tax Act and recovering those revenues through an equivalent increase in rates under the Tobacco Tax Act. This will help reduce tax evasion.

1620

Prudence and frugality in its own operations are important contributions that government can make to prosperity.

That's why we've pursued tight fiscal discipline, balanced budgets and debt reduction to provide more resources to priority areas.

We have focused on the most efficient and effective delivery of government programs and services. The result has been that, excluding health care and education, real program spending per person is down close to 30% since 1995-96.

We will continue those efforts because we cannot afford to put our hard-won fiscal discipline at risk.

Effective this year, our business planning process incorporates zero-based budgeting principles. Every ministry is now required to review all of its program spending over a four-year cycle to determine program effectiveness, efficiency and value for money.

We're taking this process further. Minister Tsubouchi has established a parliamentary assistants' committee on program evaluation, chaired by Julia Munro, member for York North. Through its government-wide review, this committee will identify resources for redirection into priority areas.

We will also begin this year to depreciate assets in the same way that a business does, as recommended by the Ontario Financial Review Commission, the Provincial Auditor and my colleague Rob Sampson, the member for Mississauga Centre. This will enable us to determine the true cost of delivering government services and improve our resource allocation.

I also propose to amend legislation to convert legislative spending authority and appropriation control to the

accrual basis of accounting effective next fiscal year. This means that ministry estimates will be accounted for on the same basis as the budget—

Interjection.

Hon Mrs Ecker: —as recommended by the Ontario Financial Review Commission, the Provincial Auditor, and the member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

Mr Speaker, in the next year we will begin to provide more stability and certainty for our public sector partners by moving toward a multi-year approach to budgeting and funding.

We will also look for better ways to incorporate information on results so that users, decision-makers and taxpayers can hold the government and its partners accountable for delivering on their goals and objectives.

Finally, we will table next year's budget before the start of the fiscal year to assist public sector organizations to plan and manage more effectively.

These initiatives may not be the stuff of headlines, but they are the hallmark of a government with a profound respect for transparency and taxpayers' dollars.

Another step is to ensure that government's services and benefits from public assets are provided effectively, efficiently, fairly, safely and in a way that is transparent and accountable to taxpayers.

In some cases, these objectives can only be accomplished through government ownership and direct operation of public assets.

But around the world, there is growing recognition that providing benefits to people no longer requires government to be the sole provider of modern services. In many cases, the government's role is to provide strong controls to protect the public interest.

In the 1900s, the public need in Ontario was electrical power at cost, all across the province. This vision of Sir Adam Beck and successive generations transformed Ontario into the industrial colossus that it is today.

But what started out as power at cost became power at any cost. And the real cost was masked by an approach that priced power below cost.

Now our generation has been handed the bill, a staggering debt of \$38 billion.

Measures to pay for these past costs are being implemented. For example, the debt retirement charge is paying down residual stranded debt in a prudent way over time.

We've also taken steps to meet the needs of a growing economy for reliable power at an affordable price.

The open electricity market promotes competition and consumer choice. The old Ontario Hydro has been separated into distinct generation and transmission companies. A new regulatory body, the Independent Electricity Market Operator, and a strengthened Ontario Energy Board oversee the market.

Hydro One remains part of this plan. As a result of consultation, control of Hydro One will remain in public hands while the government seeks the best way to bring in much-needed private sector discipline and new investment to upgrade our electricity distribution and transmis-

sion infrastructure. Public sector regulation will continue to ensure that ratepayers are protected.

Further steps will be taken. Through SuperBuild, we will continue to review other assets of the government, with a view to improving service and increasing returns. This government's continued commitment to responsible management of our public assets will yield substantial dividends for taxpayers.

Since 1995, this government has invested in those priorities that respond to people's needs and encourage growth, jobs and prosperity.

In this budget, we are choosing to make major investments in health care, in education and in a clean and safe environment: \$1.7 billion more in health care operating spending, over \$500 million more for schools and post-secondary education, a half-billion-dollar commitment to clean and safe drinking water and \$2.7 billion more for SuperBuild's priority infrastructure capital investments.

Overall program spending, excluding expenditures on health, education and the environment, will decline by 2%.

Let me provide some further details. First, on health care:

Universally accessible health care is central to Ontario's quality of life and a key part of why people want to live and work in Ontario.

Since 1995, we have worked relentlessly to build a modern, integrated health care system that can provide accessible, high-quality health care services for all Ontarians. Now, new investments are part of this. In 1995-96, health care operating spending was \$17.6 billion. This year, it is \$25.5 billion, a 7% increase over last year. This includes a 7% increase for hospitals. These increased investments are making a real difference, from increased access to diagnostic services to improved emergency rooms to more long-term-care beds.

These investments will also improve cancer care. Today, I'm pleased to announce increased funding of \$50 million over three years to improve the Ontario Cancer Research Network, doubling the number of patients who can benefit from this research. In addition, we will provide \$40 million for new therapies and treatment techniques and \$30 million to modernize and upgrade cancer radiation equipment.

My colleague Tony Clement, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, will provide details of further improvements to priority programs, hospitals, long-term-care facilities and nursing and medical programs.

We also face major challenges for new capital for hospitals and other facilities. So today I'm announcing an additional \$342 million for health capital, an increase of almost 70% over last year.

While we recognize the need for more capital investment, we also recognize the need to improve how it is invested, where it is invested and the timeliness of those investments. I'm therefore announcing that the government will commission a health capital planning review to recommend ways to streamline our health capital plan-

ning process, measure outcomes based on performance and clarify accountabilities.

1630

We will continue investing in health care, but new money alone will not solve the challenges that face us. If we want to strengthen the system, improve its quality and maintain the principles of the Canada Health Act, as we do, then we must continue to innovate, to renovate and to reform how we deliver services and invest in health care alternatives that work. As Premier Eves said in his 2000 budget, "The amount of money that government spends is not the only measure of good health care. Sustaining the quality of care that Ontarians deserve requires restructuring and reforming our health care system to keep up with new technology and meet the challenges of a growing and aging population."

This challenge is not unique to Ontario. It is shared by all provinces. New treatments, new drugs, new technologies, an aging population, increased expectations and pressure for consumer choice are all increasing costs beyond the ability of provinces to pay, are fuelling demands for reform. These are challenges that no province can meet alone. The federal government, the provinces and service providers must all be part of the solution.

Across Canada, health care spending continues to rise at over 5% per year. Meanwhile, the federal government's contribution is less than it was in 1994-95, when total cash transfers were equal to just 18% of health, education and other social spending. Last year those cash transfers totalled only 14% of spending in these areas. For Ontario this is a shortfall of \$2 billion in federal support for health care this year. We hope that the Romanow commission's report contributes to a stronger future for health care. But regardless of its findings, we already know that health care has to be a shared national priority—for resources and for reforms that will improve the quality of health care outcomes.

Ontarians, indeed all Canadians, express their nationalism through their belief in a universally accessible health care system. Our government shares this basic faith and its citizens' values. We remain willing to work with the federal government, other provinces and our health partners to implement the needed reforms that will secure this vision.

A quality education and lifelong learning are the most fundamental building blocks of future prosperity. Excellence in education is the key to ensuring that every young person in Ontario has equal access to opportunity. Parents, employers and post-secondary institutions all told us that public education had to improve and that Ontario needed to do better. Since 1995, our government has been putting in place a comprehensive plan to improve student learning and achievement.

The key elements include a new and more rigorous curriculum from kindergarten to the end of high school that sets higher standards for our students; province-wide tests that now report regularly on how well students are meeting these standards; improvement strategies that respond to test results, such as the early reading strategy

to raise reading skills for our students in the earlier grades, and the requirement that elementary schools now set improvement targets for higher achievement in early reading; comprehensive standards for teachers' ongoing professional development, performance appraisal in the classroom and an entry-to-the-profession test for all beginning teachers, to ensure that all our teachers have the most up-to-date skills and knowledge. This plan is working and student achievement is improving in both national and international tests.

It is essential that we build on these successes, that we continue to invest in student achievement, that the public education system become more accountable for results.

This spring, Premier Eves announced an additional \$65 million for textbooks and technology-based learning materials. We also provided \$25 million to expand the highly successful early reading strategy from grade 3 to grade 6 and to introduce an early math strategy from junior kindergarten to grade 3.

To keep this focus on school improvement and higher student achievement, I am announcing several new initiatives today.

To further support improved student learning, I am pleased to announce the creation of the student achievement fund. This \$20-million fund will begin by providing \$5,000 to every elementary school principal whose school meets or exceeds its student literacy goals in grade 3. The principal, in consultation with the school council, will be able to invest in their local initiatives that further improve student learning in that school.

Ontario has many excellent and dedicated teachers. While we have set higher standards for teacher performance appraisal in the classroom and professional development, we also know that investment in teacher training improves student learning. In the coming year we will provide \$10 million in funding to develop further professional learning resources for teachers and principals.

We will also invest \$5 million to extend the early math strategy from grade 3 to grade 6 and to improve the teaching skills of elementary schoolteachers in this important area.

Every day, 800,000 Ontario children ride school buses to school, so it is essential that our bus system be safe and efficient. Today I am pleased to announce that an additional \$20 million is being committed to assist with student transportation costs. This will support further development of a new approach to student transportation to ensure that school boards work together to provide safe, effective transportation for their students.

I'm also pleased to announce that we're taking action to upgrade and renew our school facilities, starting with the most pressing needs. First, \$17 million will be invested over two years to help school boards identify the most important renewal needs. Second, we will provide an ongoing increase of \$25 million in school renewal funding, a 10% increase, to enable boards to make the needed repairs and renovations. Finally, we will invest \$10 million this year to upgrade provincial schools for children with disabilities.

The initiatives in education I've announced today mean we are investing 117 million new dollars for our schools. This is in addition to the almost \$350 million in student-focused funding for the coming school year that was announced by my colleague the Minister of Education, Elizabeth Witmer.

1640

On November 3, 2000, Premier Mike Harris launched Ontario's Promise, the partnership for children and youth.

It is based on Ontario's long tradition of volunteer spirit and community service. It supports our children by mobilizing private and public sector organizations to work together to keep five promises to our young people: a healthy start, an adult who cares, safe places to learn and grow, the tools to succeed and a chance to make a difference.

To date, over \$39 million has been committed by the various partners. The Ontario government will continue to support this initiative as Mr Harris, who is now chair of the Ontario's Promise board, works to expand this important program.

Because we live and compete in a global, knowledge-based economy, post-secondary education is central to future prosperity. It plays a critical role in improving Ontario's natural advantage: our highly skilled workforce and the diversity of our population with its contacts all over the world.

To expand and improve post-secondary education, we have invested in new buildings and labs, research, capital and advanced-skills initiatives.

In anticipation of increasing post-secondary participation and the arrival of the double cohort of secondary school graduates at our institutions in 2003, we invested more than \$1 billion to create over 73,000 new student spaces through SuperBuild.

This is the largest infusion of capital dollars since the Robarts and Davis governments created Ontario's modern post-secondary education system. Universities and colleges have committed to making another 36,000 spaces available through operating improvements.

As part of our plan to expand post-secondary capacity, we announced last year the establishment of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Durham region. This new institution will provide innovative and responsive training to allow students to earn a degree, diploma or other credential depending on their program of choice. The budget bill I am tabling today will provide for the legislative framework to be in place for the 2002-03 school year.

Last year, we made a multi-year operating grant commitment to support the expected increase in post-secondary enrolment. But revised projections show a greater than anticipated enrolment over the double-cohort period, so we are increasing our previous multi-year funding commitment to colleges and universities by \$75 million, raising it to \$368 million by 2003-04.

I'm announcing that SuperBuild will work with my colleague Minister Dianne Cunningham and the Ministry

of Training, Colleges and Universities to invite a new round of post-secondary SuperBuild proposals for even more spaces to meet the enrolment increase. We are committed to continuing our partnership with our post-secondary institutions to ensure there will be a place for every willing and qualified Ontario student.

The 25 colleges of applied arts and technology graduate skilled workers from campuses in more than 100 communities. They play a pivotal role in teaching the technical skills for hundreds of occupations.

To help colleges deliver on their role, we are establishing the college equipment and renewal fund. Over the next five years, the fund will provide \$50 million to colleges to support the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment and learning resources.

We also recognize that northern and rural colleges and universities face financial challenges due to economies of scale and geography. To provide fairness and equity, we will provide \$10 million annually in additional operating funds to northern colleges and those serving rural communities and an additional \$6 million annually to northern universities.

Lack of financial resources should not limit the opportunity to gain a post-secondary education. Through consultations we will design a second phase of the Ontario student opportunity trust fund to assist 400,000 students to attend colleges and universities over the next decade.

The government has modernized our apprenticeship system and increased funding by nearly 50%.

In 1996, the federal government agreed to devolve primary responsibility for training to the provinces, along with nearly \$2 billion from employment insurance funds to pay for employment programs. Six years later, Ontario is the only province where the federal government has refused to sign an agreement. We continue to urge them to sign the labour market development agreement to allow Ontarians to access almost \$600 million in apprenticeship and skills training funds. With or without an agreement, however, Ontario must continue to improve our training and apprenticeship system. We will therefore be making further investments to provide training and apprenticeships for 6,000 to 8,000 additional individuals.

We are committed to ensuring Ontario has the safest, cleanest drinking water, and we will invest whatever resources are required to accomplish this important goal.

Following the tragic events at Walkerton, the government took immediate steps to improve water safety. These included \$18 million for Operation Clean Water to implement tough new regulations for water system operations. Justice Dennis O'Connor's two reports provide a clear road map to finish the job. That's why we've accepted his recommendations and remain fully committed to their implementation. We will be providing additional funding to more than double the number of inspectors to inspect our municipal water systems.

The events of the past week indicate the importance of constant vigilance to ensure that Ontario's water is safe and clean. Should further steps be required, we will take them to ensure our water is safe.

Justice O'Connor estimated that the one-time cost to the province, municipalities and individuals of implementing his recommendations would be up to \$280 million, with ongoing costs of about \$50 million.

I'm pleased to announce that the government will itself commit to an investment of over half a billion dollars in the next two years on clean, safe drinking water for the people of Ontario. This year, we will provide \$245 million, including investments to: help municipalities upgrade their water systems to meet our tough new standards and make improvements to their waste water systems; establish the \$50-million clean water legacy trust and the clean water centre of excellence in Walkerton to provide access to the best scientific knowledge, research and technology and training in the management and monitoring of safe drinking water. These investments will help us begin implementation of O'Connor's part two recommendations, to conduct groundwater studies to support the development of source water protection plans and purchase new environmental and water monitoring equipment for the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

Researchers are on the verge of developing an automated water testing system to enable the immediate detection of biological contamination and the immediate notification of those responsible for maintaining water systems. The province will work with municipalities, researchers and individuals to develop and utilize this innovative technology for the safety and benefit of Ontarians.

1650

I would like to thank Marilyn Churley, the member for Toronto-Danforth, for her proposed legislation to improve the province's drinking water quality. My colleague Chris Stockwell, Minister of Environment and Energy, will work with her to ensure passage of a Safe Drinking Water Act for Ontario, strengthened by Justice O'Connor's recommendations.

He also supports Bill 155, the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act, as the underpinning of a sound legislative approach to ensure safe water. In proceeding with this bill, we recognize, as does Justice O'Connor, that there may be exceptional circumstances where some municipalities may require assistance to keep water rates affordable for users.

In his part two report, Justice O'Connor recognizes that everyone will have to contribute their fair share to the cost of ensuring a safe, clean water supply, and he estimates that his recommendations could cost up to \$19 per household per year.

He also emphasized the importance of watershed planning and management. We agree, and have already taken the first step, through the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, to protect 100% of the moraine's important water resources and significant natural features.

We have endowed the Oak Ridges moraine legacy trust with an initial \$15 million. With support from other governments and the private and non-profit sectors, the trust will fund such activities as securing land, research,

public education and support for the establishment of a continuous Oak Ridges moraine trail.

From the creation of provincial parks to the Niagara Escarpment to Ontario's Living Legacy, Progressive Conservative governments have a long and impressive history of securing our natural heritage and protecting environmentally sensitive areas.

The government is also committed to clean air. I want to thank the select committee on alternative fuels and energy, chaired by my colleague Dr Doug Galt, member for Northumberland, for the many thoughtful and creative recommendations contained in its report.

Consistent with one of the report's recommendations, the Premier recently proposed that biodiesel fuel be exempt from fuel tax in Ontario, an important support for our agriculture industry as well. In addition, I propose to extend the sales tax rebate for hybrid-electric automobiles to cover sport utility vehicles and light trucks equipped with this technology.

Prosperity requires investing in the infrastructure on which our economy and quality of life depend: highways, transit, universities, colleges, hospitals, water systems, community facilities. That's why we created SuperBuild. With our public and private partners, we will invest at least \$20 billion over five years. With the \$2.7 billion allocated in this budget for infrastructure investments, the government and our partners are well on track to meet that target by 2004.

We also recognize that to become more productive and competitive, Ontario must become more innovative. Our goal is to be one of North America's top-performing jurisdictions for research and innovation.

Since 1997, the research and development challenge fund has committed nearly all of its half a billion dollars to fund research projects province-wide.

To promote research excellence and partnership between industry and our research community, I am today announcing a \$250-million expansion over five years to allow the fund to call for a new round of research proposals this fall.

We will also provide a \$300-million enhancement to the Ontario Innovation Trust to help Ontario's universities, community colleges, hospitals and research institutions develop the infrastructure needed for scientific research and technology development. This will bring the government's investment in Ontario's research infrastructure to well over \$1 billion.

The challenge fund and the innovation trust work together to promote research excellence and increase research capacity in Ontario. Including this announcement, the government will have committed a total of \$1.8 billion to innovation through these two programs.

Just last week, we saw how they work together. The government announced a joint investment of more than \$11.5 million from these programs to the Perimeter Institute and the University of Waterloo for projects to support world-class institutes for theoretical physics and quantum computing. In this budget, I am committing an

additional \$5 million per year for three years to support the Perimeter Institute's important work, starting in 2004-05. This will bring our total commitment to over \$25 million.

In the 2000 budget, we made a \$30-million annual commitment to the Ontario research performance fund. This fund is the only ongoing program in Canada solely dedicated to covering the overhead costs of research. We will strengthen our commitment to research by increasing this fund by \$2 million per year and challenge the federal government to provide ongoing and adequate support to cover overhead costs of their sponsored research.

Ontario needs to realize greater social and economic benefits from its R&D investments and the scientific output of its universities, colleges and research hospitals. More successful commercialization requires improved connections between publicly funded research and the marketplace and entrepreneurs who produce products and services that can compete globally.

Today I am announcing a \$161-million renewal for five years of the Ontario centres of excellence program to help our small and medium-sized entrepreneurial firms access expertise and commercialize inventions from publicly funded institutions.

Strong linkages between academic research and entrepreneurial firms are essential in the biotechnology sector. More than half of the research and development challenge fund's investments have promoted industry-academic research partnerships in the life sciences. But we need to do more, and we are.

On June 7, Premier Eves announced a \$51-million strategy that will help make Ontario a North American leader in biotechnology by attracting scientists and new investments. It includes a \$20-million investment in the medical and related sciences discovery district in downtown Toronto, which could result in total public and private investment of up to \$300 million.

The strategy also includes a \$30-million biotechnology cluster innovation program to provide grants to develop regional innovation plans and support the development of commercialization centres, research parks and innovation networks in regions across Ontario. The government will also provide seed funding for a bioprocessing institute, which will help make Ontario a leader in the development and manufacture of therapeutic proteins, the basis for promising new medicines. Further details of these initiatives will be announced by my colleague Jim Flaherty, the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation.

1700

Businesses need access to capital to invest in new products and services and in job creation. Investors need financial markets where their money is safe.

I would like to thank Purdy Crawford and the other members of the five-year review committee for their recently published draft report on the Ontario Securities Act. The report points out that the Canadian securities industry faces 13 sets of rules administered by 13 differ-

ent regulators. This places a burden on business and investors operating in different regions of the country and weakens our economic performance. I intend to work with my colleagues across the country to promote the benefits of moving toward national securities regulation.

When we were elected in 1995, Ontarians were facing double-digit increases in auto insurance rates, the result of the flawed policies of previous governments. As a result of our auto insurance reforms in 1996, rates fell for a number of years. However, the market has changed. Both here and across North America, rising health care and vehicle repair costs are contributing to higher rates.

We will address pressures on the system and also consider longer-term solutions to ensure that automobile insurance remains available and affordable to Ontarians. I have asked my parliamentary assistant, Ted Chudleigh, and Rob Sampson, the original author of our 1996 reform package, to complete the consultation that began last year and to return to the government as soon as possible with an action plan.

Mr Speaker, strong cities, towns and rural communities are vital to achieving economic prosperity. We recognize this and have invested in the ability of our communities to contribute to our economic growth and our quality of life.

We have implemented comprehensive and far-reaching reforms to the property tax system, and my colleague, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Chris Hodgson, has introduced the first Municipal Act in Ontario in over a century, to ensure that the legal and financial powers of municipalities will support their modern responsibilities. Under his leadership, we have launched an ambitious partnership initiative, Smart Growth, to promote and manage growth in ways that sustain a strong economy, build strong communities and promote a clean and healthy environment.

We value the contribution that strong cities make to the continuing prosperity of Ontario and Canada, as urban regions across North America compete with one another for global investment and jobs.

We are willing to join the emerging dialogue about a new deal for cities, if it's the right one. We recognize that there are calls for new revenue sources for cities, but there are also calls for greater accountability and reforms to governance. At all levels of government, taxpayers need strong assurances that their money will be spent wisely.

Furthermore, a new deal for cities requires, as a precondition, a new deal between the federal government and Ontario to restore the balance between revenue and funding responsibilities for all levels of government in Canada.

We will continue to work in partnership with municipalities, guided by Smart Growth principles, to ensure our communities have the infrastructure they need to sustain their contribution to our economic prosperity, and we welcome the federal government's participation in this partnership.

In the current fiscal year, we will provide \$520 million for municipal infrastructure, including investments in clean water, public transit and recreational and cultural facilities.

Our municipalities are accountable to their citizens to invest prudently in maintaining and improving their infrastructure. Where municipalities choose to borrow funds to support their investments in infrastructure, we want to ensure that their borrowing costs are as low as possible. We will consult with municipalities on how to lower their financing costs, including through the introduction of tax-free Opportunity Bonds.

This government's plan must allow Ontario's smaller and more remote communities to take advantage of the economic growth seen in larger urban centres. We will therefore consult with the private sector and communities about the conditions that are necessary to support sound business investments. We will draw on their experience and advice to develop legislation that would establish tax-incentive zones in Ontario to do this.

Strong communities need strong leadership. We will fund the Ontario Centre for Municipal Best Practices, a partnership between our government and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Agriculture is one of Ontario's major industries. But it's also a way of life in rural communities across the province. The future of our family farms and the sustainability of our agri-food industry are challenges that affect us all. The industry is faced with many important issues, including global trade, new technologies and environmental concerns.

Ontario is working with the industry through the Premier's round table discussions. In addition, my colleague Helen Johns, the Minister of Agriculture and Food, is representing Ontario in the discussions leading to a new agricultural policy framework with our provincial and federal counterparts. Ontario is committed to negotiating the best possible deal to meet the needs of our farmers today and for the future.

My colleague Brian Coburn, the associate minister responsible for rural affairs, has emphasized to me the importance of a fair property tax for farmers. I am pleased to announce my intention to bring forward changes recommended by Minister Coburn and my parliamentary assistant, Marcel Beaubien, respecting the property tax treatment of farmland. I look forward to receiving Mr Beaubien's final report on the property tax assessment process in the coming weeks with the goal of improving property tax fairness in other sectors in this province.

Deficits eat away our future growth and undermine public- and private-sector confidence. That is why I am tabling the fourth balanced budget in a row and why I am committed to tabling a balanced budget for 2003-04.

As we look ahead, it is clear that Ontario continues to be Canada's engine of prosperity. Virtually all of the economic indicators are improving.

As a result, private-sector forecasters expect real economic growth to exceed 3% this year and to be more than 4% next year. As it did over the 1996-2000 period, Ontario's dynamic economy will once again register growth exceeding that of the G7 nations over the next two years.

The challenges we successfully faced over the past year would have been much worse without the earlier growth in jobs and prosperity resulting from our plan, and without the stimulus to consumers and investors that we provided through tax cuts.

Some will argue that there is little we can do to influence the global economic forces that buffet our province. But we disagree. The plan we laid out in 1995 has helped Ontario weather this challenging economic storm. All we have to do is remember the last recession of the early 1990s. Ontario was the first into the hole, we went down the deepest, and we were the last out—with an \$11-billion deficit.

Coming out of this downturn, our citizens are benefiting from \$11 billion a year in tax relief, our prudent fiscal management has kept our budget balanced, and our resources are focused on the priorities of Ontarians—health care, education and a clean and safe environment.

Our government has put in place the right fundamentals for growth and prosperity, as we promised we would. The skills, the creativity, the courage and the hard work of Ontarians will do the rest.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker: Mr Duncan has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the minister have a bill?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Mr Speaker, I would request that the House revert to introduction of bills.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

KEEPING THE PROMISE FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT (2002 BUDGET), 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LE RESPECT DE L'ENGAGEMENT D'ASSURER LA CROISSANCE ET LA PROSPÉRITÉ (BUDGET DE 2002)

Mrs Ecker moved first reading of the following bill:

An Act to implement the measures contained in the 2002 Ontario Budget and to implement other initiatives of the Government of Ontario / Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le budget de l'Ontario de 2002 ainsi que d'autres initiatives du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The minister for a short statement?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): No, that's fine.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker: Mr Stockwell has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1714.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman
 Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr
 Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
 Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
 Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
 Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance
Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)		Barrett, Toby (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)		Agostino, Dominic (L)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Halton	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée	Hamilton East / -Est	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	
Burlington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Gerretsen, John (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	Kitchener-Waterloo	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
Eglington-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Wood, Bob (PC)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	London West / -Ouest	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	London-Fanshawe	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Markham	
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs, chief government whip, deputy House leader / ministre associé des Affaires francophones, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York South-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York Sud-Weston	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York West / -Ouest	
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 17 June 2002

Lundi 17 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 17 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 17 juin 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HYDRO ONE INC. DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LES ADMINISTRATEURS ET LES DIRIGEANTS DE HYDRO ONE INC.

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 13, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One Inc. and its subsidiaries / Projet de loi 80, Loi concernant les administrateurs et les dirigeants de Hydro One Inc. et de ses filiales.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): Congratulations to the member for London West on holding the chair for the evening on this very ominous day. I just want to continue my three minutes on Bill 80, which is associated with the famous, or infamous, possible sale of Hydro One and dealing with its directors and officers. The other day we heard the Minister of Environment and Energy saying, "Yes, we're going to let them go." The bill deals with letting the officers of the corporation go with no compensation and gives the minister the power to replace the new board members.

I'll take one minute or so of my three minutes to deal with today's budget. I think there was a lot of hype, and a lot has already been said about it. There was really very little content in the budget itself, a lot of figures and numbers, a lot of them recycled many times already, but when it came to the crunch, there was very little substance or help for those areas where people were expecting some real input.

1850
 I think both the Minister of Finance and Premier Eves have missed a wonderful opportunity. Premier Eves and the minister had an opportunity today to set a new tone themselves and for the government. They had a chance to set a new direction for the government and they did not. Mr Eves had an opportunity to distance himself from the old philosophy, from the old policies of the previous Premier, and he didn't. What he's saying is, "Vote for me in the next election. I will be OK until then, and afterwards I'll be on my own again."

Some of the things that are in the budget are what Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal leader, has been saying for the last three years: "Do away with the \$2-billion tax

cut," and they said, "We're going to do away with it for one year." Dalton McGuinty has said, "Do away with the \$500 million for private schools," and we see here that this has been delayed for one year.

But where the minister and the Premier have missed the boat with this budget is in giving assistance to people who need funding for education; the Toronto school board alone needs \$1 billion. There is no money for long-term care and not enough money for health care. We're still going to have long delays and lineups for emergency care. But with respect to Bill 80, we will have no choice but to support it because something has to be done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bob Wood): Questions and comments?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): As I understand it, this is the Hydro debate. I was interested in the comments of the member from the official opposition in regard to the budget, but that will be for another debate. This one has to do with Hydro.

I just have a very simple question I want to put to whoever responds on the part of the Liberal opposition, and that is, what is their position on Hydro?

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre): What? Today?

Mr Bisson: Yes, I'm just trying to figure it out. I remember that in January this year we had Dalton McGuinty, the Leader of the Opposition, saying he was in favour of privatizing Hydro One, and afterwards he said he wasn't in favour, and then he was in favour and then he wasn't again. He, along with his energy critic, was sending out letters for fundraisers saying, "Come to the Liberal fundraisers, because we need all kinds of money from you, and we support privatization." I'm glad he's finally seen the other side and agrees with my leader, Howard Hampton, that privatization of Hydro One and hydro in general is a bad thing.

What the government announced last week on the issue of the privatization initiative, saying they wouldn't privatize Hydro One outright, is a fairly major shift in its policy. But they still want to privatize 49% of it. I would argue that is not a very good thing. What's interesting in today's budget is that when you look at close to \$1.7 billion to offset spending in the upcoming year—by the way, we read it as coming from the sale of assets of Hydro One and OPG—it tells me this government is privatizing part of that valuable asset to deal not only with its own ideological belief but also with its issues in regard to its current budget shortfall. What troubles me is that what they're basically doing is pushing off their

problems till next year, 2003-04, in hopes the economy will pick up and they're able to make up the \$1.7 billion. It's a bit of a crapshoot the government is doing by way of numbers, and I'm sure we're going to get more of that when we get into actual debate on the budget.

Mr Sampson: I just want to help the member for Timmins-James Bay out, because I was equally perplexed about the exact position of the Liberal Party and their leader.

With all due respect to my colleagues across the floor in the third party—and the leader of the third party is here—we are well aware of what the NDP position is and has been for some time. I must admit it's been a consistent opinion and very clear. I can't say I really like seeing that bus with your leader's head and that light bulb on top, because it is a scary thought.

But I must say that apparently what you've got to do to understand—

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Somebody finally turned the lights on for you, eh?

Mr Sampson: No. The scary thought is that you actually had the lights go on upstairs somewhere. That's the scary thought. But if it occurs once in a lifetime, I'll let it happen.

But apparently, to understand the Liberal position, you've got to read the fine print down below. And if you get the magnifying glass out—

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): And look at the date.

Mr Sampson: It has an expiry date. It does. Now, sometimes the expiry date changes. It could be tomorrow, it could be a week from now. But in the bottom left-hand corner—left-hand corner, not right-hand corner—of their policy statement is a "best before" date. And if you don't know that "best before" date, then you really can't understand the road map of Liberal policy-making. So I say to the member from Timmins-James Bay, look in the bottom left-hand corner of the policy statement. It's there. It's really fine print: best before whatever. And if you don't look there, you'll never understand these guys.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The "best before" date is a good line. You know what? I'm going to be using it, but I'm not going to use it tonight. I'm going to use it about this government and what it says it's going to do when it comes to private school tax cuts or what it's going to do when it comes to corporate tax cuts. There are so many times that we can use the "best before" date, but we're not going to, because tonight we're having a very, very important debate. In the two minutes of comment I want to congratulate the member from Scarborough-Agincourt, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and of course Mario Sergio for their very insightful comments into something that's extremely important to the people of Ontario.

Let me tell you that the travesty that has been put on the taxpayers of Ontario is common knowledge across this country. I was at a wedding in Calgary, Alberta, this weekend, and the people from Calgary were talking about the enormous salaries the people at Hydro One

were getting. They asked me, "How can a government allow that to happen?" I said, "I don't know. My leader, Dalton McGuinty, has filed for freedom of information for the three companies of hydro, and the government doesn't want to grant that."

They said, "How can that be? Even Ralph Klein would make sure that the people of Alberta would find out why this was allowed to happen." I said to those people at the wedding, "That's all Dalton McGuinty, my leader, wants. My leader, Dalton McGuinty, wants the people of Ontario to be informed about the huge salaries that are out there, whether it be at Hydro One, OPG or Bill Farlinger. He just wants answers."

Mr Hampton: I do want thank all of the Liberal members for getting up on their feet and attempting to—

Mr Sampson: Explain themselves.

Mr Hampton: —explain themselves. I have to say that the Liberal position after all this is still clear as mud. This is the same Liberal Party that, when this government introduced their privatization legislation for Hydro, voted for it. A year ago, when New Democrats brought an opposition day motion to this Legislature opposing privatization and deregulation of the hydro system, all the Liberals voted with the government against it.

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I remember that day.

Mr Hampton: Yes. All the Liberals were voting with the government.

Seven months ago, the Liberals were mailing out invitations to the very people on Bay Street who want to make money off privatized Hydro, and I can quote the letter for you: "As you know, Dalton McGuinty and members of the Liberal caucus have been consistent supporters of the strategy to deregulate and privatize hydro in Ontario. Please send your \$350 cheque from Bay Street to the Liberal Party of Ontario."

I remember on December 12 when this government stated that it wanted to privatize Hydro One, someone put a microphone in front of the Liberal leader, and he said, "I agree with privatizing Hydro One." So after all of this, the Liberal position is as clear as mud.

But I want to say to the members of the government, that doesn't let you off the hook. Hydroelectricity is more essential than ever in the 21st century, and we should not be privatizing hydroelectricity at a time when it is such an essential public service, and we should not see these gross, inflated Bay Street salaries at Hydro One either.

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The Acting Speaker: The member for York West has two minutes to respond.

Mr Sergio: I would like to say thank you to my colleagues in the House, my colleagues from Sudbury, Mississauga Centre, the leader of the third party from Kenora-Rainy River, and the member for Timmins-James Bay.

If I can clarify, once and for all, because I think if the government has done one thing, it has even confused the third party here—

Mr Bartolucci: Which is easy to do.

Mr Sergio: It's easy to do. I have to say that Ernie Eves and the Conservatives always do a wonderful job confusing the leader of the third party and the members of the third party as well. I have been here since 1995 and my leader, Dalton McGuinty, who has been leading the fight with respect to hydro, Hydro One and the sale of the transmission grid, has said yes to competition, no to the sale of Hydro One. This confusion is perhaps understandable for someone out there, but to still have this confusion in the minds of the third party members I find quite unsettling.

I think the issue here is to give more choices to more generation. But as to the sale of Hydro One, I have to say that if it wasn't for the pressure from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, the Premier, Mr Ernie Eves, would not have changed his mind, luckily, one more time, and said, "No, we're going to keep it in public hands." So Dalton McGuinty again today said, "Yes, they have listened to us." Isn't that nice? We'll see how long the Premier is going to stay with that and say that Hydro is going to stay in public hands. This is the core of the facts.

With respect to the salaries, I think something has to be done. I can appreciate that is absolutely, totally unacceptable. Something has to be done.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Hampton: I am pleased to take part in this debate about Bill 58, the legislation by the government to try to get it out of hot water with respect to the grossly inflated salaries at Hydro One. I will also mention the salaries at Ontario Power Generation, because they need to be brought into this as well.

I'm just speaking to the people at home here, because it's really the people at home who are important on this. I want to go back to the history of what happened here. In 1997-98, the government passed legislation which they called the Electricity Competition Act. The Electricity Competition Act essentially broke up what we called Ontario Hydro and created at least three new corporations. One is called Hydro One, which is supposed to be the transmission and distribution company, the company that actually runs the wires. The other is called Ontario Power Generation, which is the company that's supposed to run the generating stations. Whether it's a nuclear station like Pickering, Darlington or the Bruce, or a coal-fired station like Lakeview or Nanticoke, or the hydro generating stations, of which there are many across northern Ontario—that is, falling water producing electricity; probably the most famous one is the Sir Adam Beck on the Niagara River—Ontario Power Generation was supposed to run the generating side of things. I won't mention much about the other split-off corporations because these two are the really important ones.

After the Conservatives created these new corporations out of Ontario Hydro, they didn't exactly set them up as crown corporations. You see, Ontario Hydro was established to provide power at cost. The idea was that Ontario Hydro was not going to charge us the cost of electricity plus 20% profit and 30% commission. Ontario Hydro was supposed to charge us the cost of electricity and that's it.

When the government set up these new companies—Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One—the government essentially told them, "You're supposed to run as if you're out there on Bay Street and you're trying to make a profit." In fact, when the government put together the boards of directors for these two companies, they basically went out and appointed their friends. This government essentially hand-picked the people they appointed to the board of directors.

At Hydro One they brought over to Ontario one of Margaret Thatcher's premier privatizers from Great Britain. Get this: his name is actually Sir Graham Day. He was knighted by Margaret Thatcher for, among other things, privatizing electricity in Great Britain, and privatizing a number of other public services like transportation as well. You know those train wrecks you keep hearing about in Great Britain? That's what happened after they privatized the system. The private passenger train companies care more about making profits than they care about passenger or train safety. But anyway, it was Sir Graham Day who was the primary, premier privatizer for Margaret Thatcher in Britain. This government brought Graham Day—Sir Graham Day; I shouldn't forget the "Sir"—from Britain over here to Ontario and set Sir Graham Day up as the chair of the board of directors of Hydro One.

What's interesting is that they told the board of directors, "Run this company, Hydro One, as if it's a Bay Street corporation. You're there to maximize profit. You're there essentially to make sure that the executive are paid according to Bay Street salaries."

So let me tell you what happened. Eleanor Clitheroe, the president of Hydro One, had been a vice-president at the old Ontario Hydro. While she was at the old Ontario Hydro as a vice-president, her salary was in the neighbourhood of \$400,000. She was hand-picked by the Conservative government and the board that they put in place at Hydro One to then become the president and chief executive officer at Hydro One. She went from a \$400,000 salary to a \$2.2-million salary under this hand-picked board that the Conservatives had put together.

So what you have to keep in mind is that this is all happening according to government policy. These are the directions that the board has set down for the board of directors at Hydro One in terms of salaries and in terms of how the company should act and behave. These are some of the salaries: \$2.2 million in salary, bonus and expense account for Eleanor Clitheroe and literally a \$6-million severance package that she would get if she ever decided to leave or if she were fired. That's what the board of directors put in place.

What the government wants you to believe is that despite the fact that this government created the legislation, despite the fact that this government hand-picked the people who were on the board of directors, despite the fact that they brought over one of the premier privatizers from Margaret Thatcher, Sir Graham Day, and installed him as the chair of Hydro One, despite the fact that they had said to the chair at Hydro One and the other

people on the board, "Act like a Bay Street corporation; pay the same inflated bonuses and salaries and expense accounts that you find at Nortel or at Enron," despite the fact that they did all that, they now want to pretend that they didn't know about and have no responsibility for the bloated, fat salaries that occurred at Hydro One.

This is quite preposterous, but when you dig a little deeper it gets even more preposterous. You see, Sir Graham Day, as the premier privatizer for Margaret Thatcher in Britain, has a track record with respect to this. In fact, when Sir Graham Day was one of the prime privatizers of the electricity system in Great Britain and was appointed to one of the boards there, guess what one of the first things he did was? He more than tripled the salary, bonuses and expense accounts of the president they brought in to run that newly privatized hydro company. A little later, when Thatcher put him on the board of another formerly public service that was privatized, what was one of the first things he did? He tripled the salary of the person they put in as president of that corporation too.

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Sir Graham Day, the person this government put in charge as the chair of the board of directors at Hydro One, has a personal track record of bloated salaries, bloated expense accounts and bloated bonuses, and yet this government wants you to believe they knew nothing, they saw nothing and they heard nothing. It's absolutely preposterous, but it gets better. There were, after all this became public, a number of people on the Hydro board, put there by the Conservative government, who actually came forward and pointed out that this government knew all along how awfully bloated and fat the salaries and bonuses and expense accounts were. In fact Jim Wilson, the former Minister of Energy, admitted he knew all about it. Sir Graham Day came forward and pointed out that all he was doing was implementing the government's policy direction. The government knew the board was implementing the government's policy direction. The government knew that the salaries of Eleanor Clitheroe and the vice-presidents—in other words, the five executive officers over there at Hydro One—were bloated and fat and completely indefensible. The government knew all along.

If you go back and look at the privatization document after this government made it public that it wanted to privatize Hydro One, their friends on Bay Street had to publish for public consumption the actual privatization document. It's called a prospectus. Right there in the prospectus, back in March, it was apparent that the salaries were quite unjustifiably bloated. The government did nothing. In fact, the government did nothing and said nothing until we made this a public issue, until question after question after question made this a public issue.

How much questioning did it take? Go back and read the Hansards for November 21. On November 21 I was raising the issue. I was asking the Minister of Energy then about the bloated salaries, not only at Hydro One but at OPG. On November 22 I wrote a letter to the then

Minister of Energy, pointing out to him that we were hearing about how bloated, how excessive the salaries were. Did the government do anything in November? No. Anything in December? No. January? No. February? Nothing. March? Nothing. April? Nothing at all. So it is really quite preposterous, what the government is trying to get you to believe here, that suddenly they just found out about this and it's all the fault of the board of directors, the board of directors that this government personally appointed, the board of directors, the chair of which, Sir Graham Day, has his own, individual track record in terms of bloated, excessive salaries, bonuses and expense accounts. The government knew all along, but they're simply trying to find someone else to blame here, and in this case they've singled out the board.

I want people at home to know what is in this legislation. It contains all the language about blaming the board and saying that the board are the bad guys, even though the board of directors was simply doing what this government told it to do. And the government wants you to believe that the legislation is actually going to set reasonable salaries for the executives over at Hydro One.

Why is it important for people at home that there be reasonable salaries, salaries that can be publicly defended? First of all, this is where your hydro rates go. If these people over there are getting paid \$2.2 million a year plus a \$6-million severance allowance, that's coming out of your hydro rates. If there are five of them over there who are in the million-dollar club, with \$2-million, \$3-million, \$4-million, \$5-million and \$6-million severance payments, that's where your hydro rates are going—to pay for this kind of bloated excess. So obviously this is important for people.

The government says that their legislation is going to do something about it. When you read the fine print of the legislation, all that's going to happen is the new board of directors is going to have the direction to negotiate with the executives at Hydro One. Well, folks, what do you think the old board did? The old board negotiated with the executives. The old board negotiated with Eleanor Clitheroe, and they negotiated her salary to \$2.2 million with a \$6-million expense account. So I say to you, what's changed? There is no reasonableness here in terms of setting a salary scale. Basically, now that they've been caught, now that they can't defend these bloated and excessive salaries, they are saying, "Blame it on the board," but they bring in a new board to do the same thing—to negotiate.

There's nothing in this legislation that would say that the salary of the president of Hydro One should be, let's say, \$500,000 a year or less. There's nothing in this legislation that says that the salary of the executive vice-president of Hydro One should be \$400,000 or less. There is nothing in this legislation that says that the other corporate officers over there at Hydro One should have salaries of \$300,000 or less. Nothing. The new board is supposed to do what the old board did—come in and negotiate.

Now, we do have a sense of what the government is prepared to negotiate. The people at Ontario Power Gen-

eration—Ron Osborne is the president there—are getting paid close to \$2 million a year. Depending on what you want to count in and what you count out, you could actually say that Mr Osborne is, when you count in all his bonuses and everything, getting close to \$2.2 million as well. The government says that's acceptable. So do you know what I think is going to happen? If they negotiate, say, a 10% reduction or maybe a 15% reduction in Eleanor Clitheroe's salary, if they negotiate her down to \$2,100,000 or maybe \$2 million, the government's going to say, "Victory, victory." I don't see much difference in the fat of \$2.2 million or the fat of \$2.1 million or even, for that matter, the fat of \$1.5 million. These are still excessive, bloated salaries.

I mentioned a while ago the figure of \$500,000. Let me tell you where that comes from. While this government wants to privatize Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation—in other words, they want to turn over what has become an essential public service to their friends on Bay Street for the purposes of making them a lot of money, and the government says that's what they want to do—in fact, Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One are still publicly owned, 100% publicly owned. So I think if we're going to get a sense of reasonable salaries, we should compare them to other publicly owned utilities.

Right next to us, Hydro-Québec is an example. Hydro-Québec is a very big public utility. They generate literally tens of thousands of megawatts of electricity. They provide some electricity to Ontario, as well as providing electricity for all the consumers and industries in Quebec, and they do from time to time export some electricity into other jurisdictions when they have a surplus. So it's a much bigger corporation than Hydro One, much bigger in terms of their assets, much bigger in terms of their sales, much bigger in terms of their potential etc.

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So for this much bigger corporation, how much do you think the president and chief executive officer of Hydro-Québec is paid? According to this government, \$2 million or \$1.5 million would be the range. No, it's not. At Hydro-Québec, a publicly owned utility in our neighbouring province that is much, much bigger than Hydro One, the president and CEO there gets paid \$407,000 a year.

Just to give you some other comparisons, in British Columbia you have BC Hydro. BC Hydro as well is a fairly substantial hydro utility. It provides hydro-electricity for all the industries in British Columbia, all the consumers of BC. And when California got into trouble with their electricity market, their privatization and deregulation, and Alberta got into trouble on their privatization and deregulation, guess who rode to the rescue? Public power. The public utility, BC Hydro, provided them with electricity when they were both running short.

How much do you think the president and chief executive officer of BC Hydro is paid: \$1 million, which this government wants to see; \$1.5 million, which they defend for the president and CEO of OPG; \$2.2 million,

like Eleanor Clitheroe? No. The president, the head, of BC Hydro is paid \$446,000.

I think what should be in this legislation, if the government really wants to do something, is a clause that says, "Salaries, benefits, bonuses and expense allowances at Hydro One should be equal to or commensurate with salaries at Hydro-Québec and BC Hydro." If the government wanted to pay whoever the president of Hydro One is \$450,000 or \$500,000 a year, let us say, if you compare it with Hydro-Québec and BC Hydro, even though they're bigger corporations, bigger public utilities than Hydro One, I think that would be roughly justifiable, roughly defensible, roughly equivalent.

But does the government have anything like that in its legislation? No. For all its huffing and puffing and chest-thumping about how the board at Hydro One are a bunch of bad guys, for all of this government's "methinks they doth protest too much" about Eleanor Clitheroe's salary, there's nothing in this legislation which would stop what happened in the first place from happening again.

I say to the government, if you want to be taken seriously, put an amendment in the bill which says the salaries at Hydro One for the chief executive officer cannot exceed \$500,000. Then the board of directors can go and negotiate \$400,000, \$425,000, \$450,000 or \$475,000, but make it clear that you're protecting the hydro ratepayers of this province.

Has the government done that? No. In fact, I tried to help the government. I brought forward a private member's bill on the same day this government introduced their legislation which has a clause in it that says that salaries at Hydro One for president, vice-president etc shall be roughly comparable to salaries at BC Hydro and Hydro-Québec, and shall not exceed \$500,000. I offer the government that amendment. They can take it right out of my private member's bill and put it in their own so they are positioned to actually do something about the bloated, fat, excessive salaries at Hydro One.

While you're at it, you should do the same thing at OPG because, let me tell you, the president at OPG, as the Provincial Auditor pointed out 10 days ago, is not exactly doing a bang-up job. The Provincial Auditor went out of his way to point out that the major project under this government's hand-picked board at OPG and the major project under its hand-picked president, Ron Osborne, which is the restoration of the Pickering nuclear facility, is over \$1 billion over budget and a year and a half late. Why are they paying bonuses to Ron Osborne, the head at OPG, when clearly things aren't going very well under his direction there? So while you're at it, roll back the salaries at OPG.

What is really at the bottom of this? I think that's what people at home want to know: what's really at the bottom of this? What's at the bottom of this is simply this: if this company were retained in public control and if members of the Legislature and members of the public were able to ask questions every day—"What are they getting paid? What are they doing? What are their expense accounts?" etc, etc—I can tell you that the salaries there would

probably stay in that \$400,000, \$500,000 range, if it were to remain in public control, because the public wouldn't put up with anything more. The public would not accept anything higher than that.

But it's very clear that this government does not intend to keep either Hydro One or OPG under public control. Well, yes, they will until the next election. Let me just tell you what the real story is on Hydro One, and it emerged today in the budget. The government said last week that they were not going to privatize Hydro One, and then they were asked, "What does that mean?" They said, "We're not going to give up control of Hydro One." They were asked, "What does that mean?" They said, "Well, the most we would sell of Hydro One—we might sell 49% of Hydro One but keep 51%." That's what they said. They might go that far.

Then, today, the budget papers came out. If you look under the section which is called "Revenue"—this is on page 57 of the budget document—the largest, the only real increase in revenues comes from something called "Sales and Rentals," and revenue from selling government assets is going to go from \$586 million last year to over \$2.4 billion this year. So we asked some of the finance people, "Where is that almost \$2 billion going to come from?" They said, "Most of it will come from selling off at least half of Hydro One." They said to us, "Depending on what the government does, if they just outright sell 49% of the shares, what the government would get to bolster its budget would be about \$700 million. If they pawn it off as an income trust, they would probably get \$1 billion out of it."

So, in fact, what the government announced last week about, "The government's not going to sell Hydro One"—it's very clear in the budget document that this government is counting on the sale of Hydro One in order to make its budget look better. In fact, if you take out the almost \$2 billion in sales of Hydro One assets and sales of other Hydro assets, this government would be in a very serious deficit situation in terms of its budget. That's the long and the short of it.

What did that announcement last week really amount to? That announcement the government made, "Oh, we're not going to sell Hydro One," what did it amount to? Let me tell you what it means. What the government is responding to is, they know that 70% of Ontarians are opposed to Hydro privatization, are opposed to this government selling off an essential public service, our hydro-electricity. Despite the fact that the government has tried through advertising campaigns and the Minister of Energy's sort of propaganda jaunt around Ontario, to change public opinion, public opinion isn't changing. The public is opposed to the sell-off of our hydro. So the government, by making the announcement they made last week, even though it's a shallow announcement, very—

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): Low-level.

Mr Hampton: Yes, it really is a low-life announcement.

They say one week, "We're not going to sell off Hydro One," and then you see in their budget a week

later that they're counting on getting close to \$1 billion from selling off at least part of Hydro One.

But what is really going on? What is going on is this: the government has to call an election within a year. They don't want to go into the election tarred with having sold off all of Hydro One, so they'll say to the public, "We're not going to sell off Hydro One." Then they'll say to their friends on Bay Street who want Hydro privatized because they can make a lot of money from it, "Wink, wink, nudge, nudge; we'll sell you half of Hydro now quietly, and if you vote for us and re-elect us, we'll sell you the rest of Hydro One after the election." That's what's going on. That's clearly what's going on.

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Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Where do you get the one year?

Mr Hampton: It could be six months, it could be nine months, it could be 15 months.

Mr Guzzo: You think so?

Mr Hampton: Yes, it could be.

But your message to Bay Street has been, "Look, we'll sell you 49% of Hydro One now—just be quiet about it—and if you re-elect us, we'll sell you the rest of Hydro One after, and we'll really put one over on the people of Ontario." That is what's going on.

What is at the root of all this is privatization. The government intends to privatize all of our hydro system, no matter if it duplicates what happened in California—prices going through the roof; no matter if it duplicates what happened in Alberta—prices going through the roof.

In fact, there was a really interesting article in the Red Deer Times two weeks ago—the Red Deer Times, home of Stockwell Day, another premier privatizer. I wonder if he's related to Sir Graham Day. Anyway, the Red Deer Times is in the root, in the heart of privatization country. The editorial in the Red Deer Times comes out and criticizes privatization and deregulation of hydro in Alberta. Why? Because now that the private corporations have got their hands on the people's electricity, they're manipulating the market to force up the hydro rates—exactly what they did in California, Montana, New York and New Zealand.

The reason they've been able to do that is simply this: if General Motors, Chrysler and Ford doubled the price of cars next week, that would create some pain for people, but people would still have a choice. They could say, "I'll keep my old car and fix it up. I don't have to buy one of your new cars at twice the price." Or people could buy a second-hand car and say, "I'm not going to pay twice the price for a new car." Or people could take public transit or car-pool and not pay the price of General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, Honda and Toyota doubling the cost of cars.

But with electricity it's not like that because electricity is essential. You need it to keep the refrigerator on so that the food continues to be safe to eat. If your kids are going to do homework at night, you need it to turn the lights on. You need it if you're an elderly person and you have to

rely upon oxygen or all kinds of other things in the home environment. And industry needs it. It's very expensive and in many cases not possible to substitute. So when Enron more than doubled the price of electricity in California, people had no alternative. They couldn't go anywhere else; they had to pay double the price. Except they didn't just double the price; they marked up the price by 20 times, 30 times, 50 times.

That's what I mean. Electricity is essential in the modern world. With all of the computerization, automation and new information technologies that have become part of society and part of the economy in the last 20 years, all of which run on electricity, electricity is more essential than ever. What they've discovered in California, Alberta, Montana, Pennsylvania, New Zealand and New York is that privatizing and deregulating electricity has allowed companies like Enron to simply manipulate the market, create an artificial electricity shortage, force up the hydro rates and bilk people out of money.

That remains the agenda of this government. It's right here in the budget. Any new revenue for health care, the environment or education is actually coming out of the sale of Hydro One assets.

As I said earlier, in terms of salaries what this government is probably going to do is say to their good friend Glen Wright—they took out Sir Graham Day, who was their boy on the Hydro One board, and put in Glen Wright, one of the new Premier's and the former Premier's golfing buddies. They put him in as the chair of Hydro One and they're going to say to him, "Bring the salaries down 10%, 15% or 20% and we'll call it a victory," never mind that the salaries continue to stay up in the \$1.5-million- or \$2-million-a-year range. This is really a façade.

What needs to be done? We should not privatize. We simply should not be privatizing something that is so essential to our economy and to participation in society as electricity now is. We should not be privatizing our hydro. Then you wouldn't be having these inflated salaries and you wouldn't be having these bloated expense accounts and you wouldn't be having these fat severance allowances at all. If you look at public utilities across North America, the salaries are all much more reasonable: Hydro-Québec, \$400,000 a year; BC Hydro, \$400,000 a year; Manitoba Hydro, under \$400,000 a year; Saskatchewan Power, under \$400,000 a year.

Don't privatize and you'll save yourself these bloated salaries and bloated expense accounts and bloated bonuses. Don't privatize and put the people's electricity system at risk, as they did in California and Alberta. Don't privatize and see the kind of market manipulation they've seen in Alberta and California and elsewhere. That's what you need to do. That's what the agenda ought to be.

I want to say to people at home that New Democrats are going to continue our campaign to stop and reverse the privatization and deregulation of our electricity system. We are going to continue that campaign.

I just want to use the time remaining to make a few remarks and point out a few things about the position of the Liberal Party, because I have found the position of the Liberals on this to be really quite bizarre.

As I mentioned earlier tonight, if people want to look at the history, go back to 1997-98 when the electricity competition act was introduced. What you will find is that the Liberals all voted for the electricity competition act, which is the blueprint for deregulating and privatizing our hydro and for those bloated, excessive, fat salaries. The Liberals all voted with the government for that blueprint.

I invite people to look again at June last year, when I brought forward an opposition motion opposing privatization and deregulation of our hydroelectricity system. The Liberals voted with the government against my opposition resolution, which would have stopped the privatization and deregulation of our hydro system. So it is really quite incredible to hear Liberals now saying they've been opposing this from the beginning.

I want to look at a couple of other elements of this—one good thing about the media is that they write stuff down or they keep their videotapes and audio tapes. So here's the chronology: on June 28, 1998—and this is on the Hansard record—the Liberals vote in favour of the electricity competition act, the blueprint for privatization, along with the Conservatives.

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This is a quote from February 5, 2001. Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty is being interviewed by the host, Larry Silver, on Radio 640. Mr McGuinty says, "We believe you've got to go toward deregulation. That's the way to bring this"—Hydro—"to heel. That's the way to introduce real competition."

On May 2, 2001, the Liberals vote with the Conservatives to defeat the NDP motion to abandon electricity deregulation and privatization in Ontario.

October 31, 2001: this is the Liberal fundraising letter to Bay Street. "Throughout Ontario's electricity restructuring process, Dalton" McGuinty "and the Ontario Liberals have been consistent supporters of the move to an open electricity market in Ontario." The letter ends, "Please," Bay Street corporation, send your \$350 cheque to the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Then there's December 12, 2001. That was the day your former Premier, Mike Harris, announced that you were going to privatize Hydro One. Canadian Press interviewed Mr McGuinty that afternoon: "Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty said privatizing Hydro One was the right move...." My, my, my.

Hon Mr Clark: How do you explain that?

Mr Hampton: Let me tell you what I think happened. After New Democrats had gone out there and conducted literally an almost 12-month campaign against hydro privatization and deregulation, and after the public started to oppose hydro privatization and deregulation and the wind changed direction, the Liberals said, "Oh, we'd better get over there. We'd better change our position."

Let me just tell you that if 10 months from now there were another change in public opinion for whatever reason—let's say this government conducted another one of their famous propaganda campaigns, where they saturate the radio waves and the television waves and the newspapers with these \$5-million and \$10-million advertising campaigns. Let's suppose this government did that and some of the public started to change their minds. Say that happened over the next 10 months. I can bet the Liberals would right away say, "Oh, the public has changed its position a bit. We'd better change our position again." I don't think the Liberals have a position of principle on this issue. I don't think they really have a position of principle at all based upon what they believe is good for the public. Every morning they get up and they stick their finger in the air and they try to figure out which way the wind's blowing. Depending on which way the wind is blowing, they will change their position on hydro.

Let me tell you, I listened to some of the Liberal members in my area. The Liberal position went from being in favour of privatization and deregulation of everything to then being, well, they're only in favour of privatizing generation, they're not in favour of privatizing Hydro One.

But I listened very carefully to CBC Radio in my part of Ontario one morning. Imagine my shock when I heard the former leader of the Liberals in Ontario, Lyn McLeod—this is the latest wrinkle; this is the latest position—say that not only would they not privatize Hydro One, but they wouldn't privatize many of the generating stations either.

Do you know what I figure happened? I figure that that day there must have been a really strong wind, and as a result of that really strong wind the Liberals sort of got blown over again.

All I ask here is that we get some kind of consistent position. Since this is an essential public service worth billions of dollars, and since both Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One have annual revenues of billions of dollars, all of which comes out of the pockets of hydro ratepayers, I think people in the province are owed a consistent position by the Liberals. I think people deserve to know what the Liberal position on hydro is.

Hon Mr Clark: I'm confused. What is it now, then?

Mr Hampton: To tell you the truth, I don't know from day to day what the Liberal position is. But for your own good I want to tell the government what its position ought to be. Look, sometime this summer electricity rates are going to go through the roof. Why? Because we're going to have three or four weeks of very hot weather. Everybody in the province will turn on their air conditioner, and the demand for electricity will go through the roof. In a deregulated system, that means prices will go through the roof, just as they did in California, Alberta, Montana, Pennsylvania, New York, New Zealand and everywhere else. When that happens, you guys will be scrambling for cover again.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): A thousand dollars to the NDP, Eleanor Clitheroe, 1995. A thousand dollars, is that right?

Mr Hampton: I have no idea. But frankly, I don't think that's really relevant to what's going on here. The point is that hydro prices, when it heats up this summer, and if the heat wave lasts for three or four weeks, are going to go through the roof. You're going to have to explain to people why hydro, which used to cost about four cents a kilowatt hour, or \$40 a megawatt hour, is suddenly up there at \$500 and \$600 a megawatt hour. You know what? Next winter, when the demand and price for electricity go through the roof again, you'll have to explain to all those people who have to rely upon electric heat and all those industries that have to heat their factories and plants during the winter months of December, January, February and March why the price has gone through the roof. I'm telling you right now, stop this now before it gets worse.

Let me tell you the other thing that's going to happen. We talked with some of the OPG officials about your proposal to sell Hydro One and OPG assets. They've told us that the market out there for generating stations is down. The market is down because the American economy still hasn't picked up, so the demand for generated electricity is not what it was, say, 15 or 20 months ago. They're saying very clearly that you're going to get pennies, 10 cents on the dollar, if you try to sell off those generating stations. How are you going to explain that to people as you're headed toward an election? How are you going to tell them that you had to sell off a generating plant that may be worth \$1 billion for \$100 million? Give yourself a break. Cut your losses now. Recognize this doesn't work. Recognize it's going to get worse down the road, not better.

Interjections.

Mr Hampton: The Liberals must be really upset here. The Liberals are really upset that they've been caught flipping and flopping again, because even though they don't have the floor, they have lots to say. But I want to talk to people at home. Recognize what happened in California. In California, after the government there was persuaded by the Enrons, the Dynegys and the Duke Energys to privatize and deregulate their hydro system, Enron was literally caught shutting down generating stations. After they shut down the generating stations and generated electricity was not available, it resulted in an artificial electricity shortage. Once they created that artificial electricity shortage, they started going around to different companies buying electricity and doubling, tripling and quadrupling the price.

Last week the governor of California, in his latest statement on this, said that as far as they've been able to tally, when the bills are all in the people of California will have been overcharged by over \$31 billion for their electricity over a two-year period. That's how much the profit-driven hydroelectric companies manipulated the market. But worse, in order to get some semblance of rationality, predictability and reliability into the electri-

city system again, the government of California had to go out and sign long-term contracts, they had to ask the federal electricity regulating commission in the United States to impose price caps and they had to buy back some of the electricity system. When you consider not only the amount by which people were overcharged, but how much they have to pay to get these long-term electricity contracts, how much they have to pay in lawsuits, how much they have to pay helping people subsidize their electricity rates, the all-in cost for the state of California is now approaching \$71 billion.

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I admit the California economy is significantly bigger than the Ontario economy. But if we scale that back to the size of the Ontario economy, why do you, as a government, want to risk that kind of market manipulation and that kind of consumer gouging in Ontario? I've read the Ontario Power Generation strategic plan and the strategic plan that was set out by Hydro One in their privatization document, and nowhere in those documents does it talk about improving hydro service in Ontario.

The Hydro One strategic plan, as disclosed in the privatization prospectus, is all about buying up transmission lines in New England, buying up transmission lines in the US Midwest at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars, which will have to come out of the pockets of the ratepayers in Ontario. It talks about building a hydro transmission line under Lake Erie. They don't want to estimate the cost, but we made some calls and the estimated cost of building that transmission line in Lake Erie is probably approaching \$1 billion, all of which hydro ratepayers would have to pay for; then increasing the connection inter-tie with Michigan at a cost of about \$100 million; increasing the transmission inter-tie with New York, the cost of which would be about \$50 million; and you can see billions of dollars devoted to shipping Ontario electricity south. That's the strategic plan for a privatized Hydro One.

What's the strategic plan for a privatized Ontario Power Generation Inc? Once the nuclear plants are back on-line, operating at, say, 80% or 90% efficiency, Ontario Power Generation plans literally to take the electricity produced at Nanticoke, the largest coal-fired generating station, ship it all to Pennsylvania and Ohio and operate that facility at close to 100%. Again, it's not about improving electricity supply for the people of Ontario; it's all about serving the American market.

What happens to Ontario consumers in this? There are lots of economists out there who will tell you that when you have an electricity market over here, where the price, on average, is significantly higher than an electricity market over here, and then you combine those two electricity markets, the price in this larger market will come down a little bit, but the price here will go up substantially. Guess whose price will go up substantially? Ontario's price. The cost to Ontario Hydro ratepayers will go up substantially. Any free market economist will tell you that.

The other reasons you should not privatize are outlined, in terms of a legal opinion, regarding what happens

when you privatize electricity in the context of NAFTA. If we continue to operate Hydro One and OPG as public utilities, we are exempt from a number of NAFTA rules. If we continue to operate Hydro One and OPG as public utilities, we are exempt from the NAFTA rule that says you can't control exports and we are exempt from the NAFTA rule that says you cannot have a two-price system. As long as we operate as a public utility, we can set hydro rates at cost in Ontario—in other words, at the cost of producing the electricity—and we can export any surplus electricity we have from time to time into New York or Michigan and we can charge a much higher price.

But once you privatize and deregulate, you can't do that any more; you have to in effect let the market set the price. Economists are telling you that yes, the American price would come down a little, but ours would go up a lot, and NAFTA would not let you do anything to control that price—not the Ontario Energy Board, not the independent market operator, not the National Energy Board. No one could do anything to in effect make that price drop or go lower for Ontario consumers.

NAFTA also says that once you privatize and deregulate, you can't control exports. You can't come along and say, "Oops, sorry. We need all the electricity in Ontario this year. We can't export any." NAFTA says you can't do that.

NAFTA also says that you can't come in after the fact and oppose stringent regulation in terms of the environment, especially where it affects the profits of international investors. Let's take this in the OPG context. OPG sells off Nanticoke to, I don't know, Ohio gas and electric or to Detroit Edison or something, and they ramp up Nanticoke to 100% capacity, ship all the electricity into Pennsylvania and Ohio and start making hundreds of millions of dollars. But the people of Ontario get sick of, and sick from, breathing in all that polluted air and they start to demand that the government do something about it. The government would be very restricted in what it could do. The government could not order them to ramp down their electricity generator from 100% to 20% of operation. Otherwise, under Chapter 11 of NAFTA, the government would be hit with a NAFTA challenge that would essentially say, "You're interfering with our profits. If you want to force this on us, you've got to subsidize us for profits lost." In fact, there are already cases out there like that where an international investor has brought a case against the government of Canada in terms of a fuel additive, and the Department of the Environment of the government of Canada had to pay this company \$150 million in compensation for profits lost.

So I say to the government, if you really want to do something about those bloated, excessive, fat salaries that you and your henchmen put in place at Hydro One, the best way to do that is to state clearly and consistently that Hydro One will remain a public utility and that salaries at Hydro One must be commensurate with salaries at BC Hydro, Hydro-Québec and Manitoba Hydro, and you would be setting a salary range of under \$500,000 a year.

I think most people, if they had the chance to compare Hydro-Québec salaries or BC Hydro salaries with that kind of range in Ontario, would say that that is reasonable, that's defensible, that's justifiable.

But what you've got before us now as a bill is simply a charade. You're going to replace the old board—people you picked, who negotiated the salaries with Hydro One, and negotiated them up to the \$2.2-million range, with a \$6-million severance pay—with another hand-picked board—and your good buddy Glen Wright is the chair—and their legal direction is to negotiate salaries again. So what's changed? The old board negotiated salaries—they went too high. Now you've put in place a new board and you've told them to negotiate salaries in the privatized context and I can tell you they're going to be equally high.

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If you think that by bringing down the salaries by 10% or 20% you're going to fool people across Ontario, I think it's gone beyond that. I think people across this province are awake and alive to your manoeuvres here. People are not going to stand for it. People recognize that hydroelectricity is an essential public service. People are not going to stand by and watch those bloated, excessive salaries that you find on Bay Street imposed on Hydro, nor are they going to stand by and watch the kind of shenanigans that have gone on in California or Alberta or Montana or Pennsylvania or New York or New Zealand happen here. People are not going to stand for that.

I have to tell you—fair warning—New Democrats are going to continue our campaign to ensure that people know what's happening. We're going to continue our campaign to ensure that people not only know what the salaries are but people understand how you're selling off important and valuable public assets at bargain prices, at fire sale prices.

Mr Guzzo: Dalton's going to support it.

Mr Hampton: Who knows what the Liberals are going to do? Who knows from day to day what they're going to do?

But the people of Ontario are certainly going to be watching and paying attention and people across Ontario are going to judge your government accordingly.

I just want to close by once again quoting from someone that this government knows and likes, someone that this government thinks a lot of, Sir Graham Day. What did Sir Graham Day say? Sir Graham Day, the premier privatizer of Margaret Thatcher, said that the government of Ontario knew from the spring of 1998 until just a few weeks ago what the salary increases were at Hydro One and always knew and approved of it.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Sampson: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It's a pleasure to see you enjoying the debate from the chair. I must admit I've never seen you so attentive to the thrilling debate that goes on in this House from time to time.

I was with you. I was being quite attentive as well listening to the leader of the third party. I was with you

for a while, I must admit, but then we came to the phantom letter, this letter of November that you indicate you have written.

Now, Speaker, the opera has its Phantom of the Opera; we in the Legislature now apparently have the Howie Hampton phantom letter. This letter that he wrote the minister in November—

Mr Hampton: That's right.

Mr Sampson: You referred to it in your delivery about the pay packages of the people at Hydro One. You've mentioned it, I guess, 20 or 30 times in this House and in many times to questions to the minister himself. He comes back to you and says, "I never got it. Did you write it?"

Mr Hampton: He wasn't the minister then.

Mr Sampson: No, no, no. He said, "Did you write it?" and you never answer. So I was with you for a while; then you left the planet. You're on some other universe, because swirling around in this universe are all sorts of nasty thoughts and conspiracy theories and views of the world that never happened. Circling around and around good old Howie Hampton's head is this phantom letter. Where is it? Why have you never presented it? Table it here if you've got a letter. No one's ever seen it.

I'm sorry. One person has seen this letter. It's you. Now the question is, did you see it in real life or was it one of those Howie Hampton NDP dreams?

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I think we must be making progress. I was down in my office watching the telly and I thought something extraordinary had happened. I had this idea that the Liberals must be the government. I heard the leader of the third party, who points fingers at others about being ideological, and I can recall the kinds of hydro price increases that took place under the NDP government. In fact, I can remember the chairman going out and buying land in the Amazon. Do you remember that? Maybe that's a good thing to do. I think we all want to see the Amazon. But to point fingers at the other side and to be talking about you guys and all your cronies—all the rhetoric about how ideological you are and all that sort of stuff with recognizing that.

I want to get a couple of other things on the record too. We must be making some progress here. Thanks very much.

Mr Bradley: A thousand dollars.

Mr McMeekin: Was it \$1,000, Jim? A thousand bucks to the NDP in 1995. There ought to be a law against that.

We keep hearing references to California. Just for the viewers out there, I think it's important to acknowledge that here in Ontario we sometimes have a NIMBY—"not in my backyard"—but down in California, which has a real population problem, they've got a whole new concept down there that is called BANANA: "build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone." That was the problem they had down there.

I was at a wind power conference on the weekend. It just blew me away. I want to tell you that the people who

are into alternative sources, the so-called green sources, are really quite excited about the opportunity to get into the private market and some of the things there. I think that public-private generation makes a lot of sense in that context.

Mr Bisson: I thought the comments put forward by my leader were quite a balanced approach.

Interjection: If not a little tame.

Mr Bisson: It was somewhat tame, I thought. First of all, it exposed the myth the government is trying to build that it knew nothing about these bloated salaries at Hydro One and OPG. I thought Mr Hampton raised quite well that the government had appointed this board back in 1998 and knew very well what salaries were being paid to the board of directors. For the government to come into the Legislature, through the minister responsible, and say that they knew nothing until a couple of weeks before this whole thing came to light I think is a little bit hard to take.

I thought it was balanced. I'm not quite sure what the Liberal position was, but he managed to point out a number of positions the Liberals have taken on this particular one, and I thought it was quite interesting.

I remember quite well the comments that were made by Dalton McGuinty—I guess it was in January that the announcement was made that they were going to privatize—in regard to where he stood on the privatization of Hydro One. When first asked by the media, it was quite clear that he was in support of the privatization of Hydro One. He thought it was the right thing to do and that the government should go ahead with it. In fact, as my leader also pointed out, just a year ago the Liberals supported the government in a motion here in the House to defeat our resolution which dealt with the whole issue of stopping the deregulation and, again, the position the Liberal leader and the caucus have taken on the privatization of OPG.

What's clear here is that there is a privatization agenda. It is supported by both the Conservatives and the Liberals. It's only the New Democrats and our leader, Howard Hampton, who are leading the charge, saying, "It's the wrong way to go. If you want to preserve prices in this province, the best way to do that is by keeping control of Ontario hydro and Ontario Power Generation."

Hon Mr Clark: First, to respond to the leader of the third party, he was making a great to-do about the salaries and that the government claimed we didn't know about the salaries, where in fact the government did state that they knew about the salaries. They were actually printed in prospectuses.

The interesting thing about it is that it was around May when this government got upset about the salaries. That was around the time the board decided to change the severance package because Clitheroe was thinking, "Uh-oh, they might not go ahead with the privatization," so they upped the salaries rather significantly. That's when the government said, "Enough is enough. We're going to intervene in this."

I was glad the leader for the third party did mention the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan and how the position has slightly shifted again.

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There's no doubt there is confusion. I can remember in my own municipality the member for Hamilton East—the leader for the third party will enjoy this—had a press conference, talking about the opposition, about how they were going to stop the Hydro One sale, and he put up a "For Sale" sign in front of a power generation centre. Actually, it was a power utility. So here the member for Hamilton East didn't even know what they were opposed to, in terms of the sale of public utilities, Hydro One or a generation plant. He didn't know the difference between the three.

Mr Guzzo: Nobody's perfect.

Hon Mr Clark: I understand that nobody's perfect, and it's difficult for the Liberals, the opposition, to get their positions straight when it's shifting as quickly as it moves. I can feel for the member for the third party. The sands were shifting. Even the Liberals still don't know what their position is on Hydro One.

The Acting Speaker: The leader of the third party has two minutes to respond.

Mr Hampton: I want to thank the members for their contribution. First of all, let me deal with the government's discomfort over the letter that I sent to the Minister of Energy back on November 28, raising with him the bloated salaries at Hydro One. Let me tell you why the government is so uncomfortable. Originally, the government's position was that they didn't know about the excessive salaries back then, and so when a letter was sent, they didn't want to acknowledge that.

People at home will understand this. Just like this government doesn't answer questions during question period, they don't answer their mail, either. That's the reality of this government. You know something? You can send a minister of this government a letter and a year and a half later you'll get a response. So I expect that a year from now I'll get a letter from whoever the Minister of Energy is then, saying, "Oh, about that issue you raised back on November 28, 2001, we don't know the answer." That's what I'll get.

Now, as for my Liberal colleagues, all I say to you is, "Will you find a consistent position with respect to Hydro, will you make up your mind on Hydro and will you stick to it longer than 15 minutes?"

The member from St Catharines says that he thinks Eleanor Clitheroe contributed \$1,000 to the NDP in 1995. He may be right; Eleanor Clitheroe, like any other Ontario citizen, is free to do what she wants. I just say to the member from St Catharines—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Bradley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to request, and I think I can get unanimous consent from members of the House, to give another minute to the leader of the NDP to explain how he got a \$1,000 donation from Eleanor Clitheroe in 1995, his party

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed. The member has one further minute.

Mr Hampton: The problem of the inconsistency of the Liberals' position really bothers him.

As I've indicated, I've received \$100—

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This was unanimous consent given to the leader of the third party to talk about a \$1,000 donation by Eleanor Clitheroe to the NDP party in 1995.

Hon Mr Clark: Nothing else.

Hon Mr Sterling: Nothing else; that's it.

The Acting Speaker: The leader of the third party has the floor for one minute.

Mr Hampton: What the Liberal members have to realize is that individual people in Ontario can make contributions to the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party or the New Democrats. As I say, I've received contributions from the president of the Liberal Party in my riding, saying, "You're doing a good job on Hydro. Keep doing it, because the Liberals are nowhere."

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I do stand on a point of order because the leader of the third party was not on the topic with which he was given the minute to speak—the \$1,000 donation.

Mr McMeekin: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I move unanimous consent to give him another minute to try to answer the same question.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Interjections: No.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Sampson: That was an entertaining one minute because I witnessed here, and so did the other members and the people watching, the leader of the third party dance and skate and spin around that issue that I am sure the member for St Catharines will speak to quite eloquently and for some time.

Interjection.

Mr Sampson: I have to, for just a few minutes here, come back to the leader of the third party. This letter thing: look, this is the way it works, leader of the third party. In order for us to answer a letter, you have to write it first, and we can't kind of read in your mind what this letter is. So for the 50th time now, it's got to be, why don't you just table it? You're up on your feet just about every minute in this House asking us to table this document or that document. For the 51st time, just table the letter so we can know what you're talking about.

Mr Hampton: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would be happy to give the Minister of Energy another copy of the letter. This will be the fourth copy now.

The Acting Speaker: There is no point of order.

Mr Sampson: The issue before the House today is of course an issue that centres around corporate governance. I said to the member for St Catharines, "I suspect you're going to be able to talk to this \$1,000 donation," and did you hear what he almost said?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): No, what?

Mr Sampson: He almost said "from the working people." He almost said that. He stopped halfway through. You heard it. Hansard will never catch that, but I'm sure you'll—

Interjection: Correct the record.

Mr Sampson: Correct the record and inform us fully on the extent of that \$1,000 and indeed whether your records show it was paid back.

I have to say to the members opposite, this is an issue around corporate governance. Corporate governance is actually quite a hot topic, if you will, in the corporate world because corporate governance issues around executive payment packages, director payment packages, compensation packages—

Mr Hampton: Destroying evidence.

Mr Sampson: Well, you want to raise the Enron issue. Certainly the Enron issue is an issue around corporate governance and nobody's going to disagree. But it's not as though corporate governance is an issue that's just a problem or an issue, if you will, around the hydro world. It's an issue around the corporate world globally, and it's more than—

Interjection.

Mr Sampson: I say to the leader of the third party, it's more than just around the Hydro issue.

Mr Hampton: You mean they're all corrupt.

Mr Sampson: No, it's a matter of whether the shareholders are aware of and can deal properly with the directions and the governance issues that are provided by the directors and the executives.

Mr Hampton: You knew about it all the time.

Mr Sampson: I won't debate with the leader, because I know, Speaker, we need to speak to you directly, but the issue here is, does the shareholder have the right in this world, whether it's a public institution or a private institution, to demand that the executives and the directors speak to the wishes of the shareholders? This legislation before us is saying in fact they do have that right and they should have that right.

In the budget today there was a reference to a report that's the five-year review committee draft report that was presented to the Minister of Finance concerning securities issues and securities laws and governing laws. It was actually chaired by Purdy Crawford. As I was reading through that today, there's a section here, a reference by the chairman, Purdy Crawford, who did the securities review, that actually quoted a comment, among many other things in here, from the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board, talking about corporate governance and the rights of shareholders to deal with decisions that are made by the executive of corporations and the board. There's a reference here that says, "When a problem surfaces, they"—this is the shareholders—"must be able to discuss their concerns. When a corporate proposal is made that demands opposition, they must be able to act."

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Well, that's what this act does. It says that the shareholders—the shareholders being the people of the province of Ontario, and we the elected representatives representing them—have the right to act when they see there's a problem. And that's simply what this legislation does. The problem was that there were compensation packages presented by, I assume, some compensation committee at Hydro One to the board for approval that we and, I dare say, everyone in this province felt were excessive. We asked the board to deal with it, and they simply said to us, representing the shareholders, "No, you do that." Well, we've done it. We've said, "We need a new board. We need to go back into the compensation packages and negotiate a plan that's fair to the taxpayers and fair to the employees who are being compensated."

I find the argument of the leader of the third party in this instance a little bit confusing. I find most of his arguments confusing, but this one is particularly confusing because he's saying, "No, no, no, no, no. This Legislature should arbitrarily determine the salary packages of the people who are employed at Hydro One. We should do that arbitrarily." This is from the champion of contract negotiation over here. This is from the guy who thinks that contract negotiation is paramount. But for certain people—

Mr Guzzo: The social contract.

Mr Sampson: It's their social contract. You're exactly right, my colleague from Ottawa.

Mr Guzzo: No discussion.

Mr Sampson: No discussion at all.

So for certain types of people, social contract; for certain types of people, negotiations. You can't have it both ways.

Speaking of having it both ways, let's just briefly talk about the positions—that's plural—of the Liberal Party.

Mr Gill: What day?

Mr Sampson: I say to my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and all sorts of lovely places—did I get it all right?

Mr Gill: Thank you, yes, you got it right.

Mr Sampson: I got it right. I say to my colleague, he's right: position on what day? It's almost, on this file, position on what hour?

Remember the good old days, when the Liberals used to take a position and stick to it?

Interjection: No.

Mr Sampson: I don't either. They've never done it. You've never done it. Remember the red book? Red Book I, Red Book II, remember those? They weren't even off the press when the guy in my riding was speaking another language. It was a totally different policy he was talking to. You guys won't even let the ink dry, but you change the policy. On the hydro file, you've been, as the leader of the third party says, clear as mud.

Mr Guzzo: One honest Liberal—Gagliano.

Mr Sampson: I thank my colleague from Ottawa for that very insightful interjection, because he's right. You need to have that microscope, that little reading glass, to

read the "best before" date. You know what? Every product you consume in this province has a "best before" date. The Liberal policy, same thing. All you guys need is an UPC code and you'll be able to be sold in all the market stores around the province of Ontario because you've got that "best before" date. Just make it a little bigger. I ask you, just make it a little bigger so we can figure out—

Interjection: The position expires.

Mr Sampson: —when the position will expire.

Mr Bisson: And which one to use.

Mr Sampson: To be fair, we do need to know which position for them to use. But do you know what? So do they, because the problem is, each member has a different "best before" date for each policy.

Mr Guzzo: Where is Paul Martin?

Mr Sampson: You're right, I say to the member from Ottawa. The only guy who has this right is Paul Martin, except that it was the Prime Minister who gave him his "best before" date, right? Think about it.

Dalton McGuinty, May 29, 2002—because he changed his position on December 12, so the "best before" date was December 12. Here's what he said.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): That's the pot calling the kettle black.

Mr Sampson: No, I said he didn't say that. This was a question to him. It doesn't say here who was questioning him, but I suspect it was a member of the media. "I remember, I think, you saying, and I don't know for sure"—the question is confusing—"the idea of a sell-off of Hydro One was acceptable." McGuinty's answer: "I've been very consistent with respect to Hydro One. I think it should be kept in public hands. I've been very consistent when it comes to generation. There should be competition."

Interjection.

Mr Sampson: Don't get excited now.

That had a "best before" date of December 11. On December 12 he said, "I would bring in legislative oversight. I think it's important that we move ahead with competition both in terms of generation and in terms of transmission. But there are good public-private partnerships, there are bad public-private partnerships. My concern is, I think this government is on the right track." Uh-oh. He said, "I think we should sell it. If we're going to move forward with privatization, I think we should do that." That was December 12.

There's a "best before" date apparently on that one, because some time in February, after Howie did the first round of the province with the light-bulb-on-his-head bus thing—it's not the best idea—then he changed it again.

I'm not going to chew up all our time here. All I want to hear from you guys is, what's the "best before" date for the current policy? No, no, back up. Why don't you tell us what the current policy is first and then tell us what the "best before" date is? And don't yabble on to me about things like the tax credit for schools, because—

Mr McMeekin: Let's talk about your budget.

Mr Sampson: No, no. I'm going to tell you something about that little baby. Do you know what the Liberal position was on that a couple of months ago? A year ago? I heard your leader saying in the House, "We're in favour of that. We're just not too sure when and how, but we're in favour of it." That had a "best before" date too. The "best before" date of that policy was the day before the budget before this one, when the minister announced it.

Look, guys, it's not difficult. It's really not difficult. Sometimes it hurts, but it's not all that difficult. Just tell us clearly where you stand and tell us how long you're going to stand there. That's all we need to know.

Mr McMeekin: So you're going to amend the Tax Act when? When is that coming?

Mr Sampson: No, no, I just want you—we tell you exactly where we stand. I need to find out from you guys what your positions are.

With all due respect to my colleagues in the third party, they have been consistent from day one. With the exception of the phantom letter, they've been bang on their position. This phantom letter thing is going in and out—I don't know where that's going to land—but they've been consistent. They've been consistently wrong, but that's a track record they showed us from 1990 to 1995. They were consistently wrong for five years. We're not going to expect them to turn around on that, but at least they're consistent.

Interjection.

Mr Sampson: I say to the member opposite, what are you talking about? Your position has been 100% sale, 0% sale and everything in between. Just tell us where you are now. It's simple; stand up here and tell us what you think should be done with hydro—the generation and the transmission—and why. And I say to my colleague from Management Board, then tell us how long you're going to hold that position for, so we can have something to judge you by. It's real simple. You can do it, I know that.

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The Acting Speaker: It's now time for questions and comments: two minutes from each side in rotation.

Mr Bisson: I really thought that was a well-balanced, well-thought-out speech. I thought it was a good balance. Trying to point out the position of the Liberal caucus, I thought, was interesting.

In response to my good friend Mr Sampson—pardon me for using his name; I don't remember his riding offhand—in his speech he talked about the letter, saying Howard Hampton and the New Democrats have been consistent all the way through this thing; they have taken one position and moved it forward except for, as he terms it, the phantom letter.

For the record, I just want to say we've now sent three copies of that letter to you. We can give you a fourth or a fifth if you want. It ain't a phantom letter. In fact, we did send a letter out from the House leader—

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I think we should give him 57.

Mr Bisson: We should give him 57 letters. That would be a good thing. But we had sent the letter last fall,

and the purpose of that letter was quite simple: we were all alarmed, looking at the numbers from Ontario Hydro, about the amount in salaries being paid to those people on the board of directors, and we were trying to raise that issue even back then. Why it's relevant is because all of a sudden the government has tried to say it didn't know anything about this, and we say they did.

You appointed the board, you knew who the board was. It was in your hands. If you didn't know, then you've got to ask yourself why. And the answer to that would be simply: if you didn't know, it's because maybe you weren't in command of—I don't want to be mean, but you know what I'm saying. I guess what I'm trying to say is, maybe you guys kind of mucked up.

On the question of the Liberals, I'm just so glad you pointed that out. This old line of a just-before date is, I think, really relevant, because I get as confused as you. The other point I thought was even more interesting is the various positions that various members of the Liberal caucus have taken on the same day. Where on one day someone is saying "yea" to privatization, on the same day somebody in another part of the province is saying "nay," and it's really difficult to understand exactly where the Liberal caucus is coming from on this one.

I want to thank the member for his speech, because I thought it was most entertaining.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I just wanted to reiterate what my colleague Mr Sampson was talking about. He certainly distinguished the positions: the NDP, clear all the time—wrong, but clear—and the Liberals, unclear—they don't know what we're talking about here. Actually, it reminds of an incident I should share with you. One day in the House of Commons, a socialist was pouring out abusive words—that's something that never changes—against Prime Minister Churchill. Churchill remained impasive, almost bored. When the language was over, Churchill rose and said, "If I valued the opinion of the honourable gentleman, I might get angry." I might paraphrase that to say that if I valued the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition, I might get angry at his inconsistency of position.

What we're trying to do here is the right thing. Clearly it's the right thing. I think everyone here understands that. The problem here is, although we all understand that, it takes so long to get a position that is blatantly clear to all of us.

I have a lot of sympathy for the leader of the third party. He had a vision. He had this light bulb over his head. That was his vision. It blurred where he was going from time to time, but he was consistent, consistent, consistent.

The Liberal position, again, has always been blatantly inconsistent. I really do commend my colleague for clearly outlining what is blatantly a very unclear position.

At the end of the day, you folks are going to have to take a position one way or another, a position that somehow we'll put on the record. It's fortunate for us that the reporter from Global was able to bring that inconsistency to the Leader of the Opposition, otherwise it may not

have been admitted to. Otherwise he still would have been trying to cling to his newest position in front of the public.

At the end of the day, the NDP have a certain position, we have a certain position and the Liberals are basically two sides of the same face.

Ms Di Cocco: I want to get back to the wonderful issue of Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One. The reason I listened intently to this, sort of, pointing fingers and blame game that's going here is that I want to talk about the responsibility of the government of the day that appointed the directors of this corporation and that was asleep at the switch while they were making decisions. According to a number of the directors who resigned, this government knew all along what the decisions were, because they were given briefing notes. After all, Hydro One is a public asset. The public asset was run by a board. The board was responsible to guess who? The government and the ministry. Do you know who has responsibility for the decisions made by the board? That is the crux of the argument, and that is the depth of debate we should be having today.

Yes, you brought in legislation. Why? Because you were asleep at the switch while the Hydro One board of directors were doing exactly what they wanted to do. All they wanted to do was put millions of dollars, and they were allowed to do so, in the hands of individuals who were running the corporation.

Remember, since 1999 you added over \$1 billion to Hydro's debt. You were the captain of that ship.

Mr Prue: To the member for Mississauga Centre and the previous speaker from Sarnia-Lambton: much has been talked about tonight in general terms about Hydro. I do have to say to the member from Mississauga Centre that I found your comments, although amusing, really quite arcane. They were arcane to the point that you were attacking opposition parties for their positions or for their non-positions: for those who have a position, it is a wrong position; for those who have no position, I guess it's just no position.

Surely this government must start to point some of the fingers at itself. Clearly, your position on the whole issue of hydroelectricity has gone from point to point to point. It has gone from outright sale to problems with OPG and Hydro One to problems of people trying to raise their salaries. In all of this there is one thing you have to say: you are the government. It is your responsibility and you have not done appropriately by that responsibility.

If you truly want to protect the taxpayer, you have to seek some kind of consensus from around this room. On the day the Minister of Environment and Energy stood up and read out this bill, he said he wanted immediately, at that point, all-party unanimous approval to pass the bill. Nobody had even read a copy. We hardly understood, because he read so quickly from down there in that corner at the far end of the room what he was trying to do, and he was surprised when someone said no.

With the greatest of respect, I think if you're very serious about this, you have to start acting more like a government and less like an opposition party. It's not

enough to attack; you have to come up with the right ideas, and you have not come up with the right ideas, with the greatest of respect.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Dave Levac): Further comments for final summation?

Mr Sampson: I want to thank the members for their contributions to the debate.

Just a couple of things: look, the Liberal position is that you somehow should fire the shareholders because of the decisions that were made by the board and the executive that the shareholders disagreed with. So, "If that has happened, fire the shareholders."

Hon Mr Clark: Isn't that absurd? That's an absurd position.

Mr Sampson: That's totally absurd, I say, and the Minister of Labour agrees. If a corporation and the executive make wrong decisions, you don't fire the shareholders. The shareholders deal with the executives and the boards that have made those decisions and ask them to change those decisions. That's all this bill does.

The other thing that is patently absurd here is that we're spending a significant amount of time in this House debating this bill that does exactly what the two of you guys railed at us for weeks to do. You said the salary packages, as reset—and the Minister of Labour is right that the word is "reset"—by the board and the executives when they saw that the light at the end of the tunnel was a train coming at them and not the end of the tunnel.

You sat for days in this House and pummelled the poor minister over there: "Get rid of the packages. Get rid of the board." Well, here we are. So what do you say now? "We want to think about this little thing a bit." That's what you're saying. Look, my point earlier was that you've got to take a position and stick with it. You took one when they changed the packages and you were creaming us. Let's get on with it and deal with this bill and pass it.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I'm pleased to join this debate. I am rather saddened at the earlier debate, though, which seemed to reflect on what the leader of the third party wants, what the Premier wants, what's their vision. The real challenge is, what do the people of Ontario want? I haven't heard anybody talk about that this evening. What do the people of Ontario want?

Our leader, Dalton McGuinty, challenged the government to hold an election on this issue; it is such a fundamental issue. That has been refused. At the very least, this topic merits a referendum. What do the people of Ontario want done with their electricity system? It doesn't belong to the board of directors; it doesn't belong to Eleanor Clitheroe. It belongs to the people of Ontario.

I'm going to ask the Speaker's indulgence; I'd actually like to speak to the bill in question for a few moments, if I could. I know it will vary from the earlier speakers, but I feel a need to. The bill itself deals with firing the directors of Hydro One. The Liberal Party supports that. It should never have happened. There should never have

been a need for this bill. If the government had done the monitoring properly, these kinds of salaries wouldn't have arisen.

I'm not sure, actually, that they didn't monitor it and weren't aware of it. We're hearing very clearly from former directors that they filed information with the government indicating what the salaries were. So whether they're bothered about the salaries or whether they're bothered about the fact the salaries went public—I suspect it's more that the salaries went public. Some of them over there look a little sleepless, and I think that with conscience maybe they would have trouble sleeping at night after the scenario we've gone through of the money being paid to these few individuals.

But it also unveils a larger problem with this government. We've seen a gentleman, Paul Rhodes, take home \$140,000 or \$150,000 working for the ministry that was supervising water testing and working for the water-testing lab at the same time. We've seen the health minister hire someone during his leadership campaign who took home \$300,000.

We contrast that with what I see in Ontario. The experience of the people of Ontario is that a few have done very, very well. But in this chamber last Thursday during private members' business, we watched the government vote down a private member's bill that would have provided for a cost-of-living increase for people receiving ODSP. They refused a 2% increase for people with disabilities who have not had an increase in about 12 years. We see a government that has lost touch with individuals in Ontario.

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe the member has an urgent telephone call from the ambassador to Denmark for Canada, which he may want to take.

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order. You may continue.

Mr Parsons: I didn't realize Ontarians with disabilities were an item to be joked with. I suggest the members need to spend more time in their constituency offices and meet with individuals who are truly, truly suffering in this province with no increase and expected to live on \$930 a month maximum in Toronto, where apartment rents run that amount of money.

I would also mention that I will be sharing my time with the member from Davenport. The government side will probably prefer it when I sit down and the other member stands, but I don't think they'll—

Interjections.

Mr Parsons: Yes. Any time during it. Don't get hung up on details. You people don't.

What is very clear through these discussions on Bill 80 is that we have the directors and we have the shareholders, where the shareholder is the Ontario government—in fact, the shareholders are the people of Ontario. I'm intrigued by one condition in this, that no claims can be made against the government or Hydro One with respect to appointments, removals, compensation limits

and other matters imposed by this bill. The reality is that there was a legal contract with a legally constituted board. The government has often used a heavy hand, but the courts have later held that in fact it did not have merit.

But I want to talk, as the others also have, about Hydro One and this mad urge to privatize. We need to review the history of this government over the last few years. When the judge held court where the question was, does the Ontario government have the right to sell it, the judge pointed out very clearly that at one time the stance of the current government was, "It is not for sale. It will be restored as a crown jewel for the taxpayers of Ontario." So the stance from the government was very strong that it would not be sold.

We're now seeing that it's going to have private sector involvement and private sector discipline. I don't know what that means, and I would suggest that most, if not all, members on the other side don't know what that means. It's going to be publicly owned, and it's going to be privately owned. That's like the old expression about being a little bit pregnant: you can't be a little bit privately owned and a little bit publicly owned. They are going to sell it or not, and the degree to which they sell it is irrelevant.

Are they going to sell part of it, all of it or none of it? We can look at their actions. The actions are that this government went to court to get the right to sell all of it. They didn't pull off their lawyers; they didn't concede the case. They went to court to get the right to sell all of it. Why do they want the right to sell all of it if they're not going to sell it? I don't have an answer to that. Maybe they do. They are continuing to push through a bill that is best described as a blank-cheque bill. It will give the government the right to do anything. Why do they need that bill if they're not going to sell it? Why can they not be more specific? Why are they waiting until the House is adjourned to indicate their actual plans for it?

I have suspicions that they don't want to debate this item in this House. It's far better to make the decision over the summer when people are on vacation and the House is in recess. I think that's a very poor treatment of the fragile thing we call democracy. But they still seem relatively committed to private sector involvement.

They won't hold a referendum. Consumer Reports this month got results from 31,000 people who live in communities that are deregulated. Thirty-one thousand doesn't represent everyone, but it's certainly a significant sampling of people, and in its own way it's a referendum. They made a fascinating comment about deregulation, and I'm going to read it exactly: "Incessant telemarketers interrupt your dinner but customer service won't answer the phone." They spoke to people in virtually every state in the US, and most states are either acknowledging that they made a mistake or they haven't really deregulated.

This government keeps referring to Pennsylvania and what a great example it is. Pennsylvania has an advantage in deregulation that we don't want; that is, their industry isn't growing. They're not expanding, and they

don't have a need for additional electricity. We don't want that condition in Ontario. We want to recognize that there is going to be growth, and we want to have the capacity for it. So Pennsylvania isn't a really good example.

Here's what Consumer Reports found from the 31,000 people who answered their survey: "While consumers have made some gains under deregulation, on balance they've lost ground. Service has typically deteriorated." I would ask anyone in Ontario who has been involved with some of the private companies delivering electricity to try to get their phone call answered when they have a service problem. "Consumer rights have sometimes suffered. Claimed price cuts are often not all they seem. And when free markets have gone bad, deregulated industries have seen no contradiction in getting multi-billion dollar government bailouts....

"The oft-repeated claim that deregulation cut consumer prices while regulation kept prices artificially bloated is a myth. The inflation-adjusted cost of airfares, telephone service, and electricity was falling for decades before deregulation."

And here is what I'm hearing from consumers in my riding who are dealing with some of the private operators: "The marketplace has become more adversarial toward consumers. Absence of strict rules has inspired aggressive tactics which have led competitors to respond in kind." We've seen some of these electricity retailers have their right to sell suspended for a period of time. We're reflecting the American experience. We're having the same patterns up here. "Sellers have gained disproportionate power over buyers through widespread use of hidden charges, fine-print loopholes, ever-changing prices, and unauthorized switching of service."

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The US experience regarding electricity deregulation and privatization has not been positive. Were there problems with our old Ontario Hydro? Yes. Were they as bad as the government presented? No. Firms that produce electricity, whether public or private, know it is very capital-intensive and they have to do massive debt borrowing. The debt was escalating and needed to be controlled. The challenge that the government should have risen to was fixing our electricity system, not skipping out on it, letting the sales and deregulation take place and being able to stand back when the problems arise and the rates rise and say, "It's not us; it's deregulation. This is what has happened."

We can look at the deregulated airline industry. As the prices of airline tickets have gone down, so has the service. We cannot tolerate a reduction in electricity service in our Ontario.

Mr Ruprecht: I want to thank my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings for his remarks and for clearing up certain things. I just wanted to tell you very briefly that the Ontario Liberal electricity plan for Ontario is very clear: (1) consumer protection—let's put deceitful door-to-door retailers out of business; (2) fairness through tough regulation—we need more public over-

sight to keep things fair, (3) reliable, affordable power—we need more power through a mix of generators; (4) keep the grid public—we must not sell Ontario's electricity highway. This should put all the debate about where this party stands in a very clear light. It's clear what the Liberal position is.

There seems, however, to be some confusion in the public's mind as to where this government is heading. Today we know the government wants to sell 49% of Hydro One. A few days ago we didn't know what the government wanted, but we knew the government wanted to sell all of Hydro One. We don't know where this government will stand tomorrow. The point is simply that there is a certain confusion, but there is even more confusion in the public's mind as to what is happening with Hydro One at present.

But there is no confusion when people look at their hydro bills. That hydro bill is clear to them. The rates have gone up. The hydro bill is clear to each one of them. They are coming to my office—and I'm sure they are going to each of your offices as well—and asking, "What is in store for the future? What is the government's intention for the future of Ontario? Will you sell? Will you not sell? Please don't sell."

I've written down certain things when people have come to my office. There are very many statements being made, but combine them all and you come up with something like this: "Deregulation has been a licence to profiteer and steal from workers, pension-holders and shareholders." That's what I hear in my constituency office. That's what you hear in your constituency offices as well. When residents are coming to you to ask what your position is going to be, or is at this point, I want to know what the Conservative members tell these residents. They're coming to my office, many of them because they have been ripped off. They're coming to your offices because they've been ripped off. They want to know what they should do. I want to know from each one of you, what are you telling them? Are you telling them to rip up their contracts? Are you telling them to keep their contracts because the rates might go through the roof in the very near future? Are you telling them, "Hold on, keep things as they are"? I want to know what you are telling these people when they come to ask you about their hydro bills. I want to know that.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): What do you tell them?

Mr Ruprecht: What I am telling them is very clear, and that is, "Let me see the contract you signed." Do you know what? In many cases their signature has been falsified on the contacts they've signed. I would never have thought it was possible in Ontario that there would be crooked retailers and salesmen out there who are trying to falsify signatures.

Mr Klees: Report them to the police.

Mr Ruprecht: We have.

Mr Klees: It's a criminal act.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please.

Mr Ruprecht: I'm sure you are getting the same requests I'm getting. Consequently, what happens here is

very clear: we must tell our residents clearly what our position is as to what we should do and what we are recommending. What 70% and even more in my riding are recommending to you is, do not sell Hydro One. Don't repeat the mistakes you made when you sold Highway 407. Within the very first year after the sale, the profits doubled. That kind of record is not good record.

Interjection.

Mr Ruprecht: That is not a very good record for the former Minister of Transportation.

The Acting Speaker: Would the member take his seat, please. Until this point I haven't had to do anything, except in this case I hear some yelling. I would ask you to refrain, please.

Continue.

Mr Ruprecht: It's a bit disconcerting when I hear the opposition jumping up and down because apparently they can't bear the truth. But the truth is that Highway 407 has been sold and a great deal of profit has been made, and no one on that side can stand up and say that's not true.

The other thing I want to say is that when the former Premier fired hundreds of nurses, what happened next? Within two years we were trying to rehire and bring back, at exorbitant increases and special bonuses, the same nurses who were fired from Ontario, saying to them on our knees, "Please come back, because Ontario hospitals have a lack of nurses." You made a mistake on Highway 407, you made a mistake firing the nurses and you're making a great mistake selling Hydro One. Today, it's 49%; tomorrow, who knows what?

We're simply saying, stop the insanity. The vast majority of the people of Ontario are totally opposed to the sale of Hydro One, and you know it. Don't do it. You've still got a chance. But do you know what? It's very strange that the same people are saying, "We're only going to be selling 49%, believe us. It's just 49%, and we're going to keep control of Hydro One because we've got 51%." It's strange.

I want to tell you something very interesting in what Justice Gans has just indicated. He's saying very clearly that the government does not have the authority to dispose of its Hydro One shares under the Electricity Act, 1998. He said, "No, you can't sell Hydro One." What are you doing instead? Instead of saying, "This certainly gives us breathing space, we ought to reconsider what we should do, we've got various options to look at," you said, "Do you know what? In case we want to sell Hydro One, we're going to push a bill through, because we've got the majority and we may be doing it in the future."

That's the confusion out there. People want to know. They're coming to our offices and saying, "Mr Ruprecht, please tell us what the government has in mind, because we do not want to continue with the California experience. We do not want to continue with the Alberta experience, where privatization put rates through the roof." Secondly, they're now being subsidized in Alberta. That's the case, and certainly nobody can argue against that.

Furthermore, think about this—I just can't figure this out—the Chair of Hydro One has requested a \$1-million

golden parachute saying, "Every year after I leave Hydro One, I demand, I want, I request and I'm going to get a million bucks as a parachute for me to retire." Can you imagine that? A million bucks to retire. This government should probably say, "Maybe we should have some breathing space," and thank Justice Gans. Here is your chance.

Of course you've said this is outrageous, but you only said this was outrageous because the opposition forced you into it. We stood up through demonstrations, through petitions, through arguments in this House. We've also said that Justice Gans was perfectly right. When the NDP, sometimes in their own position—you know, I should tell you this quick story before my time runs out: here I was on March 4 demonstrating against Hydro One, and there comes this big NDP bus around the corner of St Clair and Dufferin. Out jumped two very prominent NDPers in this House, and they're passing out leaflets. I thought at that moment, "Great. The NDP is joining us in the fight against this government to sell Hydro One." But what was very interesting was that they were passing out leaflets against me, about why I shouldn't be demonstrating. I thought that for the public good we should be stopping the sale of Hydro One. It doesn't matter what party we are—it doesn't matter if we're Liberal or NDP—we want to stop this government from selling Hydro One, and that, my friends, is in the public interest.

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The Acting Speaker: It's now time for questions and comments.

Mr Bradley: Eleanor Clitheroe.

Mr Prue: I'm going to have to talk to you about her later. I don't even know who she is, other than what I've heard in here.

I'd like to comment on the statements made by the member for Prince Edward-Hastings and the member for Davenport. The member for Prince Edward-Hastings spoke quite eloquently, actually. He zeroed in on what the key issue here is. The key issue, as has been explained by the judge, Mr Gans, was that the previous minister of the environment and energy clearly said that Hydro was not going to be sold, and there was an expectation around the province that it was not going to be. Then, of course, we had the famous statement on the last day of the former Premier when he came here and announced it was going to be sold. I think it threw quite a few things into turmoil.

He talked quite logically about the quotations from Consumer Reports and the fact that many consumers in the United States have lost ground and have deteriorating service. I want to commend him for bringing the actual facts to bear here.

Then we went on to the second speaker, member from Davenport. I have to tell you that some of the statements were a little arcane. I know they caused some considerable grief to Minister Turnbull, but—

Hon Mr Turnbull: Because they were untrue.

Mr Prue: Perhaps, but truth is in the eye of the beholder, especially in this House.

He asked the question—and I think it deserves comment—what is he to advise his constituents? I think no one can advise constituents. We are in a place where it is impossible to provide any real advice. Do you tell them to sign a contract where they're going to get ripped off, or do you tell them that when the rates go through the roof they're going to get ripped off? In either case they're going to get ripped off, and that's the reality of it.

What he said, and he did make one good comment, was that 49%—

The Acting Speaker: I thank the member.

Hon Mr Clark: I can understand why the loyal opposition gets so upset when we start talking about their changing positions. It's almost like when there's an earthquake: the sands just kind of fall apart and they fall through.

Think about the number of times they've changed positions on issues on this House. Let's think about this. The amalgamation issue—amalgamation in Hamilton. I can tell you that during the election the Liberal members were full force in favour of amalgamating all the municipalities. Domenic, the member for Hamilton East, was in favour; the member for Hamilton Mountain. I opposed that sucker tooth and nail. It happened. Now we're working to get the city prospering. We're all working together. The decision is made.

To the members for Hamilton and St Catharines, the decision is made, and now we've got to move forward. But now the Liberal position is to de-amalgamate Hamilton. They want to un-amalgamate Hamilton. But that's only Hamilton. That's not Toronto, not Ottawa—

Mr Mazzilli: Or Flamborough.

Hon Mr Clark: No, just Hamilton. So there's another switch.

Then do you remember—I remember this very definitely—the teachers' strike in Hamilton and the back-to-work legislation? I can remember parents coming down here and visiting with the member for Hamilton East. He assured them that if the education relations committee came through with a statement that the year was in jeopardy, the Liberals would support back-to-work legislation. Well, lo and behold, they came through with the decision and the Liberals flip-flopped and voted against it. The parents were so chagrined about it. They could not believe that happened.

Here we have Hydro One. Yes, they're in favour of privatization, and then they get forced into saying no, they're opposed to privatization. So if there's any confusion, I can understand your frustration on the other side. But it's your own positions that keep switching.

Mr Bradley: If there's one issue I would not, if I was on the government side today, be talking about switching positions on, it's Hydro One. It started out that you people were selling the whole thing. It was going to be privatized; it was gone. Then it started to change a bit. Finally the Premier had six different options one day—six different positions. Pick the one you wanted. I just wanted to say, on this issue, I would not go there if I were you.

But I think you may agree with this one. I always thought the NDP was the most virtuous party there was. They would never accept a donation from just anybody. I'm naive, I guess. I went to the 1995 New Democratic Party donors during the year and I found reference number 210369, Mrs Eleanor Clitheroe, of Oakville, Ontario—\$1,000 to the NDP. This is the official record, and the date of this is May 26, 1996.

Hon Mr Sterling: That was before the election.

Mr Bradley: This was given before the election. Eleanor Clitheroe is the one we're talking about tonight, the one with the multi-million dollar salary, with the platinum parachute. I thought they wouldn't take money; they're going to give the money back, because I heard the leader of the New Democratic Party stand up with a bill the other day, saying, "No donations from this category of person." Eleanor Clitheroe, who's been criticized by everybody, gave \$1,000 to Howie Hampton and the NDP and they haven't given it back. I'm surprised, shocked and chagrined.

Mr Bisson: My, oh my, have we got the Liberals excited tonight. They've resorted to looking at records back to 1995. Eleanor Clitheroe gave us a thousand bucks.

There's a little problem in this argument, though, I have to say. First of all, not only do you have to go back a number of years to try and find that; as I understand it, one individual by the name of Eleanor Clitheroe gave a \$1,000 contribution to the NDP in 1995. What we've been talking about in regard to the problem is that when money from Ontario Hydro flows into the hands of the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party, as a party, we have not accepted any money from Ontario Hydro, or any other corporation for that matter, as you know, because, number one, we have never been very closely allied to the business world, so we tend not to get a lot of money from them; and number two, for a number of years, it's well known that our party undertook a policy that says we are not to accept any money from the corporate sector. In fact we would, from time to time, get cheques from various corporations and unfortunately we had to send them back. Now, I didn't agree with that policy—I think we should take money from corporations as we do from unions—but the position of the party was that we don't do that.

Yes, maybe one Eleanor Clitheroe, individual voter in the province of Ontario, sent the NDP a thousand bucks. She might have sent the Liberals a thousand bucks; she might have sent the Tories a thousand bucks. The point is, Ontario Hydro was solicited by the Liberal and Conservative parties for contributions in a by-election in Parry Sound that represented \$5,000 and \$10,000 each. As I remember, we didn't ask for, and never did we receive, any money from Ontario Hydro.

That could well be the facts but I'm sure if you go back to 1885, you might find something that's a little bit more interesting.

The Deputy Speaker: For final summation, the member from Davenport, two minutes.

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Mr Ruprecht: I just want to read into the record what happened on Wednesday, April 17, 2002. It says here:

"Ontario Premier Eves quashed persistent rumours today that he plans to delay, or even cancel, the imminent sale of the province's hydro grid."

"No, absolutely not," said Eves, when asked if he would halt the privatization of Hydro One. "It hasn't even crossed my mind." Speculation was rampant Wednesday among politicians and opponents to the sale that Eves, who officially took office earlier this week, was going to stop the sell-off."

What's important—and I want to address myself specifically to the member for Stoney Creek, who brought some municipal problems into the debate. I have here with me a number of municipalities that clearly indicate and are saying to the government, "Please do not sell Hydro One. Stop before it's too late"—a whole list. They come from London, St Catharines, Kingston, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Caledonia, Bradford, Fort Erie, Fort Frances, Hagersville, all over Ontario. All the municipalities are voting. They're voting in their councils. And what are they voting on? A recommendation to this government not to sell Hydro One.

But I want to be clear, because there has been a position, and people are saying simply no. The point is, there's confusion as to where the Liberals stand. Let me be very clear. The Liberal electricity plan is (1) consumer protection—let's put deceitful door-to-door retailers out of business; (2) fairness through tough regulation—we need more public oversight to keep things fair; (3) reliable, affordable power—we need more power through a mix of generators; and (4) keep the grid public. The Liberal position is that we must not sell Ontario's electricity highway. It's a clear position.

The Acting Speaker: It is now time for further debate.

Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre): It's a privilege to get up and participate in the debate on second reading of Bill 80. It was really interesting. I was listening very intently to the leader of the third party tonight. He made comment that the government's policy was to privatize Hydro One. He said it was in today's budget. Well, I didn't hear that part of the budget, so I had to go to the budget. I see here it says:

"The open electricity market promotes competition and consumer choice. The old Ontario Hydro has been separated into distinct generation and transmission companies. A new regulatory body, the Independent Electricity Market Operator, and a strengthened Ontario Energy Board oversee the market."

"Hydro One remains part of this plan. As a result of consultation, control of Hydro One will remain in public hands while the government seeks the best way to bring in much-needed private sector discipline and new investment to upgrade our electricity distribution and transmission infrastructure."

It goes on to say, "Public sector regulation will continue to ensure that ratepayers are protected."

Hon Mr Clark: Howie didn't read it.

Mr Wetlaufer: That's correct, I say to the Minister of Labour. I think the leader of the third party did not read it.

I would like to break down the problems of Ontario Hydro, Hydro One, the way that my constituents see it. They see that Hydro One, on the one hand, has a debt of \$38 billion, and they see that this asset, which the members of the third party and the opposition say is a huge asset, totals \$17 billion. So we've got a liability of \$38 billion and we've got an asset of \$17 billion. Not only do we have a stranded debt of \$21 billion but then Hydro comes along and says to the government, "We need \$5 billion to \$8 billion to upgrade our infrastructure for the year." OK, \$5 billion to \$8 billion. Then the Liberals and the New Democrats make this great big deal of the fact that they've got a profit in Hydro One of \$310 million.

Let's put this into perspective the way my constituents do. They have a house worth \$170,000. That's the asset. All I'm doing is knocking off some dollars here, some zeros—a house worth \$170,000, a mortgage of \$380,000 and stranded debt of \$210,000. Then somebody comes along and says, "Now you have to carry out \$50,000 to \$80,000 worth of repairs to this house." But the income of this family is only \$3,100 a year. That \$3,100 won't even go anywhere near paying the interest, let alone carrying out repairs. That is the problem with Hydro One.

The people of Ontario expect that we will have seamless and cost-efficient generation, transmission and distribution of electrical power. They've had this for years and years and years. They expect that they can go to their light switch, flip on the switch and they will have hydro.

Hydroelectric power affects virtually every facet of each and every one of our lives. It's crucial that the electrical system—

Hon Mr Turnbull: It's critical.

Mr Wetlaufer: It's critical. It is crucial that the electrical system on which we depend be run efficiently. Not only must it be run efficiently, but it must be run with Ontarians' interests in mind, and that is the role of government. The proposed Hydro One Inc. Directors and Officers Act would ensure that whatever option the government chooses for the future of Hydro One, it will be implemented with the utmost regard for Ontarians' interests. We expect that through this act Hydro One will operate as a responsible, efficient business enterprise, with full accountability to its shareholders. Who are the shareholders? We are, you are, they are—all Ontarians—through the government.

The government places the highest priority on protecting the interests of the people of Ontario. In May, it became fairly clear, I think, to everyone here that the board of directors did not share the government's perspective on what the best interests of the people of Ontario are. So we introduced the proposed legislation. And what does it do? It enables us to replace that board of directors with a board that does.

What did the board do? Well, in a fit of pique, the directors resigned, and we have moved very quickly to appoint a new interim board, one with responsibility and accountability to the people and the government of Ontario. That's what the Liberals asked for and now the Liberals are criticizing it. The NDP—well, they have their own agenda. It's one we don't agree with, but they have their own agenda. They're consistent; something the Liberals haven't been.

I think everybody sees what happens when accountability is lacking. Everybody in this House was aghast when we found out what the compensation was of those five officers of Hydro One. We were aghast when we found out what the retirement benefits were. We were aghast when we saw that Eleanor Clitheroe got a \$175,000 car allowance. I don't know about you, but the car I drive certainly doesn't cost \$175,000 a year.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: A hundred and seventy-five bucks.

Mr Wetlaufer: Yeah, 175 bucks.

Hon Mr Turnbull: We missed the decimal point.

Mr Wetlaufer: We missed the decimal point, right.

The Hydro One executive are employees of a government-regulated monopoly. Before that, it was in large part a prolonged absence of accountability that contributed to Hydro One's problems. So it led to our decision to restructure the board several years ago.

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"Efficiency" and "accountability" in the old Ontario Hydro were words that didn't really exist in their vocabulary. So by the mid-1990s our electrical system had been suffering from waste and mismanagement, one would say chronic waste and mismanagement, and that puts the whole system at risk; it is not a reliable system, then.

I would like to repeat: it amassed a debt of \$38 billion, with assets of \$17 billion, or, again, to put it in the terms of my constituents, a \$380,000 mortgage on a \$170,000 house.

The result of Ontario Hydro's mismanagement is nothing short of criminal, and the public wasn't aware of it. Rates were being kept artificially low. It wasn't a matter of electricity at cost, which was Adam Beck's principle. It became a principle, under the old Ontario Hydro, of electricity at any cost, and you simply cannot operate a business that way. I don't care whether it's a government business or a private business, you can't operate it that way. There must be some accountability. There must be discipline, and that discipline is the kind that only the private market can introduce. Does that mean Hydro One has to be in the private market? No, it doesn't, but it must have the type of discipline that the private market brings.

Most recently, in respect of the executive compensation practices, we felt—and so did the opposition Liberals and the third party—we all felt, that Hydro One was continuing the pattern of waste and mismanagement which had begun under the old Ontario Hydro. This proposed legislation will help bring the accountability and discipline that Hydro One needs. It will also balance

the protection of the rights of the Ontario government, as Hydro One's shareholder, with the needs of Hydro One's board to direct the corporation as an effective and efficient business enterprise. The government introduced Bill 80 both to redress the extravagant compensation and retirement packages of Hydro One executives and to ensure that the board of directors acts in the best interests of Ontarians.

Whatever the future of Hydro One, the status quo is not an option. It cannot be an option. For years, Ontarians could take for granted that the sufficient supply of competitively priced electricity existed to meet our needs, and we must continue that. There was no reason to expect anything else and there still isn't, except that Ontario Hydro was not subject to the discipline that we know it must be.

So the government took steps. We consulted broadly and we decided on a course of action. In October 1998, the Energy Competition Act was proclaimed after much public debate and input. It also created a new regulatory body, the Independent Electricity Market Operator, and strengthened the powers of the Ontario Energy Board to ensure that consumers would be protected.

Today, Hydro One owns and operates the province-wide electricity transmission grid and owns the local distribution systems serving more than 1.2 million customers across Ontario. Under the new system, no matter who owns the transmission, distribution, retailing or generation businesses in Ontario, the Ontario Energy Board licenses all of them. The passing of this proposed Hydro One Inc. Directors and Officers Act would complement the work of these regulatory entities by ensuring that Hydro One operates in a manner that puts consumers' interests first.

I love to hear the Liberals say that they're the only ones who ever talk about the consumers' interests. What absolute balderdash, it's baloney, because that is all we have ever done. But the Liberals have amazing powers of interpretation. If you don't agree with their power of interpretation, if you don't agree with the interpretation they make, wait a minute. It will change. It's just like the weather in Victoria.

We knew when we began restructuring the electricity sector that some people would prefer to stay with the status quo, but I want to point something out: staying with the status quo would mean accepting that 35% of every electricity bill in the province would go toward servicing the debt on an ongoing basis. It would mean facing serious difficulty in financing the construction of the new generators and upgrading the transmission grid. The best generating system possible would be virtually useless without a modern, well-maintained transmission system to bring electricity from the power plants to Ontarians' homes and businesses.

To ensure that the transmission grid serves electricity customers reliably and efficiently, we need realistic, cost-effective options for Hydro One, and the proposed legislation would ensure that the Hydro One directors will act in our best interests, meaning all Ontarians'.

Interjection.

Mr Wetlaufer: Thank you, Rick. I'm looking at that. I realize I've only got two minutes and I'm going to talk out the clock because I'm not going to give you another chance to get up.

Through the consultations, we asked Ontarians for their views on the following four key objectives as outlined by our Premier, Ernie Eves: (1) to ensure an efficient supply; (2) to ensure the necessary capital to rebuild and modernize the transmission and distribution of power in Ontario; (3) to bring market discipline to Hydro One and to eliminate and prevent any possibility of the

recurrence of staggering debt; and (4) to achieve these goals while protecting consumers.

From the many letters, faxes, e-mails and phone calls that the Ministry of the Environment and all of us in this caucus have received, one thing has become very clear: Ontarians understand that the old Ontario Hydro debt was not sustainable. They understand that the status quo is not a desirable option.

The Acting Speaker: It is now 9:30 of the clock, which means this House will stand adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2129.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
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Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)		
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)		

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of Ontario**
Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**
Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 18 June 2002

Mardi 18 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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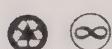
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 18 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 juin 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

INVESTIGATION INTO CHILD ABUSE

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I rise today to renew my call for a public inquiry into the handling of allegations of child abuse in my community.

Last night I was at the installation of the seventh bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall at St Finnian's Cathedral, where there was standing room only. Some 80 to 100 concerned citizens gathered outside in support of a public inquiry. They want answers to the questions that have plagued the community for years.

I was pleased that the new bishop, Paul-André Durocher, spoke with the protesters yesterday and said he would meet with them within the next few weeks to talk about allegations of child sexual abuse. He even announced during the installation ceremony his intention to meet with a group of citizens and he got thunderous applause. Many said afterwards that the new bishop was a breath of fresh air.

Yesterday's demonstration wasn't the first time my community has rallied to support an inquiry. Two years ago the member for Ottawa West-Nepean introduced a bill to have a public inquiry and many of my constituents gathered petitions with over 12,000 names. The opposing side could only gather 100.

The new bishop has taken positive steps in showing his willingness to open dialogue with the people of my community. It's time now for the government to take another step in the right direction and immediately call a public inquiry.

FUNDRAISING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): As we go through the summer months into September, in Ontario and across this country there are fundraising efforts being undertaken by any number of volunteer and charitable organizations. One of the leaders among those fundraisers is our firefighters. Indeed, Welland's volunteer firefighting companies were awarded Ontario's Fire Department of the Year award by the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada.

Regrettably, though, this government, its policies and its stupid squeegee kid bill have inhibited and frustrated firefighters' efforts to raise money for muscular dystrophy. Indeed, as you well know, last September down in Welland just one nutbar calling the police forced the police to shut down the fundraising activities by firefighters.

Steve Pandur from Welland Volunteer Fire Company Number 4 has written to the Premier. I've joined him with a letter of my own and I raise this issue in the House today. This, Premier, has resulted, with the squeegee kid law, in a shortfall of a quarter of a million dollars in the funds that could have been raised here in Ontario. It's time for this Premier to take control of the matter and introduce amendments so that firefighters like Steve Pandur, and his colleagues in Welland, across Niagara and across this province, can continue to do the good work they've been doing for so many years to help so many. It's time for this government to get off its duff.

HOUSE OF BLESSING

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise today to congratulate Stratford's House of Blessing on their new location at 423 Erie Street in Stratford.

For almost 20 years, the House of Blessing has been providing extremely beneficial programs and services to the people of Stratford and the surrounding communities. It's a place that many people have turned to in times of crisis and desperation. The House of Blessing provides food, clothing, toys, furniture, counselling and spiritual advice to about 500 people every month. Before moving into their new location, the House of Blessing operated from a small house in Stratford that was only 81 square metres. Their new facility has 729 square metres and includes space for a community room, a walk-in cooler and freezer, an area for furniture and equipment repair, many rooms for counselling, storage and clothing displays. This may even interest the member for Windsor.

I want to take this opportunity to commend Florence Kehl, the founder and executive director of the House of Blessing, for her passion and dedication to those individuals and families who sometimes need a helping hand.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): What about the Common Sense Revolution?

Mr Johnson: I'll speak louder to get over the heckling from the member from Windsor.

Florence Kehl's husband, Norman, also deserves special recognition for his commitment. I also want to

applaud the efforts of Peter Black, the chair of the board of directors, and the board members, volunteers, businesses and agencies in my riding that continue to provide support.

Please join me in wishing the House of Blessing every success in their new location.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): Yesterday afternoon, Ontario colleges and students were once again shortchanged by the Eves Conservatives. While Ontario's 24 colleges of applied arts and technology provide 40% of post-secondary opportunities for high school graduates, they received less than 7% of the \$75 million for operating grants the government introduced to address the double cohort.

The double cohort is not just a university problem. Colleges are facing the same challenges as our universities. Following a decade of underfunding, yesterday's budget does nothing to change the fact that per student funding in Ontario remains well below the national average. We are still last. Enrolment in colleges has increased by 35%, while at the same time provincial funding as decreased by 40%.

Colleges have warned that \$125 million is needed if they are to meet the enrolment increase of the double cohort and the anticipated skills shortage. The reality of their situation appears to have been lost on this government. Communities across Ontario will soon face critical skilled labour shortages. With an aging population and a dwindling labour supply, my own community of Hamilton will be among the first to confront this crisis. Yesterday, Premier Eves undermined the very institutions our communities will depend on as they tackle the emerging worker shortage. Lack of provincial support will make it impossible for colleges to successfully meet both this human resource challenge and the government's pledge surrounding the double cohort.

OUTSTANDING YOUNG FARMER PROGRAM

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Everyone here knows the importance of good farmers to the economy of this great province of Ontario. We have many excellent farmers in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Mr Stewart: Thank you, Mr Speaker. This happens to be a fairly important statement for people in my riding.

We have many excellent farmers, and I rise today to show my appreciation for their dedication, hard work and wisdom. In particular, I would like to recognize Ontario's outstanding young farm family for 2002, John and Eadie Steele and their two children, Ian and Chelsea, who reside in my riding of Peterborough. The Steele family was chosen for this honour in April, at the 23rd annual

awards banquet in Mississauga. The Outstanding Young Farmer program was designed to recognize farm couples who exemplify excellence in their profession. As well, the program strives to promote agriculture among the urban population.

For the first time in the history of this program, the operators of a sheep farm have been awarded this title. John and Eadie Steele emigrated from England in May 1990. By June 1991, they had their first 67 commercial ewes on rented pasture, and in April 1993, they purchased their current farm of 300 acres near Norwood in Peterborough county. The Steele family will represent Ontario in the national competition to be held during the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto this November.

I would like to thank and compliment all farming families, such as the Steeles, for the high-quality farm operations they run.

To the Steele family, the best of luck in the national competition this fall.

1340

HEALTH CARE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Yesterday's budget just showed us very clearly that the Ontario Ernie Eves government has no idea what it's doing in terms of taking care of people's health care. What we saw in the last seven years with the development of the Health Services Restructuring Commission was that it yanked funding away from hospitals. Now, seven years later, you're attempting to make announcements about putting money back into hospitals.

I ask this government, what happened to primary care reform? What happened to getting us family doctors so that people who have to access the system have the physicians ready on the front lines to do the job they're supposed to do?

The budget yesterday did nothing to address where we're going in health care. All it did was pour money back in that you took out seven years ago, and it's an acknowledgement as clear as day that you have no idea what you're doing in health care.

Yesterday the minister and the government decided to muse about MRIs and CTs in a private clinic. Where will the radiologists come from? Are you going to siphon them from the public sector? Where are the technicians to run these machines? Again, you won't address the shortages in personnel in the health system. How can you ever make the health system work?

I ask this government again, where does it think it's going? I agree with Liz Witmer when she said on her first day on the job as the health minister that this government has no vision. Yesterday's budget said the same thing: this government has no vision. The only group that does is the Ontario Liberal Party.

ST LUKE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): St Luke Catholic school, located in my riding of Mississauga South, is the first school in Mississauga and Peel region to receive a level one certificate for the progressive excellence program, PEP, of the National Quality Institute. I was privileged to attend the awards ceremony on May 31 when St Luke Catholic school received this honour.

The PEP program helps to increase levels of student achievement so that children and youth can acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible members of society. The program serves as a template for schools to continually strive for excellence and gain recognition for their achievements.

At the first level of certification, a school is setting a foundation for moving forward on the program's Roadmap to Excellence, which culminates in the national and international recognition of the Canada Awards for Excellence.

What makes a school like St Luke so special? This school has a vibrant community spirit. The students love being at school and rave about their extracurricular activities and field trips. Their parents speak enthusiastically of the school's innovative, dedicated teachers who foster a love of learning. The teachers commend their principal, Andre Young, for providing visionary leadership that maximizes the staff's diverse strengths.

I am happy to wish the St Luke Catholic school community every success as you progress through the PEP program. With the coordinated efforts of parents, teachers and church, you are providing an exceptional learning experience that will benefit your students throughout their lives.

TAXATION

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): We in the official opposition are delighted to hear that gone are the days when tax cuts create jobs, gone are the days when tax cuts increase government revenue and gone are the days when tax cuts work. Finally, gone are the days when that gang says, "We're doing what we said we'd do."

We witnessed yesterday the biggest flip-flop in the history of politics in this province, maybe second only to the NDP's social contract. And now they're trying to move to clean up the messes that they themselves created. The people of Ontario won't forget that you created those messes. They won't forget the 39 hospitals you closed. They won't forget the schools you closed. They won't forget what you've done to classroom education. They won't forget what you did to the Ministry of the Environment. They certainly will not forget what happened at Walkerton.

This flip-flop, this monumental change of course—they've abandoned their own supporters. They will not win the trust of other voters. There has been one alternative that has been clear and consistent from the

beginning; Dalton McGuinty has offered that. Dalton McGuinty has offered a consistent alternative that will serve the people of this province well. When we're given the chance to implement it, you will be nothing but a bad memory and a bad stain on the history of the province of Ontario.

AIR CADETS

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Last weekend, the Air Cadet League of Canada and the Royal Canadian Air Cadets closed their year-long 60th anniversary celebrations with their 61st national annual general meeting in Niagara Falls.

Throughout this past year, the Air Cadet League of Canada has organized special parades, contests and other commemorative events to celebrate the achievements of their first 60 years.

A national effective speaking contest was held in Niagara Falls on Friday, with a successful air cadet representative from each province participating. The cadets spent five days enjoying the beautiful Niagara area and departed for home on Sunday. Cadets were hosted by local air cadet families in Niagara Falls.

My own constituency assistant, Barbara Greenwood, and her husband, Major Bill Greenwood, graciously accommodated two cadets from Edmonton and Thunder Bay. Major Bill Greenwood was instrumental in organizing cadets from the Niagara area.

Jennifer and Lindsay Shields and Matt Calvert were just three of the cadets participating. All three have had distinguished cadet careers.

I would also like to make mention of John Derousie, a member of the Air Cadet League from Thorold, who was vital in the organization of this event, as was Major Luigi Norio.

I stand in the House today to offer my congratulations to the Air Cadet League of Canada and the Royal Canadian Air Cadets on their 60th anniversary. Best wishes for the many years ahead.

VISITORS

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I invite all members to join me in welcoming Arvid and Linda Heics, who are here as proud grandparents to watch their grandson Colin be one of our pages. Welcome.

ANNUAL REPORT, OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I've laid upon the table the annual report of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner for the period April 1, 2001, to March 31, 2002.

ANNUAL REPORT, LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION OFFICE

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I further beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the third annual report from the lobbyists registration office, Office of the Integrity Commissioner, with respect to the administration of the Lobbyist Registration Act, 1998, for the period of April 1, 2001, to March 31, 2002.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CITY OF OTTAWA ACT (REMEMBRANCE DAY), 2002

Mr Guzzo moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr3, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

ROYAL OTTAWA HEALTH CARE GROUP/SERVICES DE SANTÉ ROYAL OTTAWA ACT, 2002

Mr Patten moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr7, An Act respecting Royal Ottawa Health Care Group/Services de Santé Royal Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 86(a), this bill stands referred to the Commissioners of Estate Bills.

1350

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My questions today are for the Premier. Premier, as your government lurches from crisis to crisis, crises of your own making, it has become clear that you are willing to say absolutely anything in order to hold on to power. You embraced tax cuts at one point; you now reject them. The Taxpayer Protection Act was your bible from which you drew all of your inspiration, and now you're quite prepared to tear that bible up.

The last time you talked about Hydro One, you told us that it was off the table. We now learn that it is back on the table. You tell us that you were going to move ahead with corporate tax cuts, but now you're not quite so sure about that. Finally, you tell us that you've managed to both support and oppose private school tax credits simultaneously.

Premier, when you are prepared to change your position at the drop of a hat, when you are prepared to say anything in order to hold on to power, why should Ontario families trust you?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The leader of the official opposition obviously didn't hear or read what the Minister of Finance had to say yesterday. On page 7 of this year's budget, he will find a schedule of tax cuts that have been delayed but are going to be implemented and will be delivered by the Minister of Finance in next year's budget.

Mr McGuinty: I can understand why the Premier is making desperate efforts today to try to reassure that segment of his corps which is concerned about the recent flip-flop when it comes to tax cuts. But I believe, Premier, that leaders must, in the end, stand on principle and conviction. Ultimately, that's how we earn the trust of our voters. But whatever principles and convictions you had, sir, have now been conveniently jettisoned.

The Taxpayer Protection Act was your bible. You drew your inspiration from that document. You said you would honour that law come hell or high water. But as they say, that was then and this is now.

Premier, if you are prepared to tear up your economic bible, the Taxpayer Protection Act, why is it that Ontario families should trust you on anything at all that you say?

Hon Mr Eves: Our track record on tax reduction speaks for itself. You belonged to a government called the David Peterson government that raised taxes some 37 or 38 times. We on this side of the House reduced taxes 193 times, between Mr Flaherty and myself, and we will continue to reduce taxes a whole pile more times come next March.

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition is unaware that there were certain events on September 11 that happened in New York, and they resulted in decreases in the US economy, the Canadian economy and virtually every jurisdiction in the western world. We are dealing with those fallouts from revenue from the events of September 11, but we are balancing the books of the province, not once, not twice, not three times but four times in a row—something that you never did.

Mr McGuinty: The only fallout we are dealing with here is the fallout of any principles and convictions that you might have had. That's all we're talking about here.

Premier, you said countless times that tax cuts created jobs, tax cuts spurred on economic growth, tax cuts generated the revenues that would support our social programs. You said there was no such thing as a bad tax cut; all tax cuts were good tax cuts, whether in good or bad economic times. There was simply no such thing as a bad tax cut.

After September 11, your government said it was essential that we accelerate tax cuts. It was important to bring them forward because they would work their usual magic. Now you tell us that today, for some reason, is not a good time to go ahead with your celebrated tax cuts. If you are prepared to say absolutely anything in order to

hang on to power, why should Ontario families trust anything you say?

Hon Mr Eves: In case the leader of the official opposition is interested, there were five more tax cuts in yesterday's budget than your government ever introduced in five years. Talk about principles. I understand you have voted against every single one of the 193—soon to be 198—tax reductions this government has introduced in seven years. You can be free to vote against, if you wish—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Sorry, Premier, it was too noisy. Is the Premier finished? New question, the leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: These questions are also to the Premier. Really, this is all about a question of trust. It is clear that you have different messages for different audiences at different times.

You don't just have two sets of messages, you also have two sets of books. The spending estimates that were also tabled yesterday adopt a radically different approach than the budget. There's a \$210-million discrepancy in the Ministry of Agriculture, for example. The health numbers are off by half a billion dollars. The numbers in the spending estimates for the Ministry of the Environment are \$89 million lower than in the budget. We know we can't trust what you say because you're prepared to say anything. Can you now tell us how we can trust your numbers if in fact you have two different sets of numbers?

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the official opposition should be the last one talking about trust and getting the voters' trust in this House. It seems to me the leader of the official opposition protesteth too much.

Very simply, he's talking about tax reductions. We have reduced taxes, including the ones introduced by the minister yesterday, 198 times. I'm sure you'll vote against these five like you did the 193. The people of Ontario certainly know where you stand with respect to those 193. They certainly know where I stand with respect to those 193. How about the five yesterday? How about the 21 to come? Where are you going to stand on those?

Mr McGuinty: What the Premier doesn't seem to understand is that you cannot be both a Tory and a Liberal at the same time. We're the Liberals over here; you are the Conservatives over there. We stand for better health care, better education and protection of the environment. We will never support any tax cuts that compromise those services that families have to be able to count on. People know what we stand for because we've been fighting for those things for seven years. The question I have for you on behalf of Ontario families is, what do you stand for?

Hon Mr Eves: I stand for the 193 we've passed, the five introduced yesterday and the 21 more to come in March. That's what I stand for, and you'll have a chance to vote against these too.

1400

Mr McGuinty: I happen to believe that credible leadership is all about conviction, principle and integrity. With this budget, this Premier has jettisoned whatever principles, convictions and integrity he might have had. This is a Premier who is prepared to say anything in order to hang on to power. Tax cuts that he once embraced as a magic elixir have now been jettisoned. The Taxpayer Protection Act, which was once his bible, he is now prepared to tear up. Those are all gone.

I ask you again, Premier, on behalf of Ontario families, if you are prepared to say anything to hang on to power, why should we trust you when you say anything at all?

Hon Mr Eves: Anybody who squeals and whines that loud must have a serious problem, or think they do, as we go forward.

We know exactly where you stand with respect to promises. This is a quote from Dalton McGuinty on March 1, 1998, "I think people understand that when we make promises—"

Interjections.

The Speaker: Sorry to interrupt the Premier. Will the Premier take his seat? It's too noisy. We'll just wait. The Premier did have some time. Once it settles down we'll let him come back and finish up. Premier?

Hon Mr Eves: I think people understand that "when we make promises," meaning the Liberals, "generally that calls for" a tax hike. You're exactly right; the people do know where you stand on tax hike issues, and you're going to have a chance to prove it to them 219 times before the next provincial election.

SALES AND RENTALS REVENUE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I have a question for the Premier. There is a revenue line in yesterday's budget called "Sales and Rentals." Over the years this line has consistently averaged \$600 million, except in the year 1999-2000 when the ill-conceived Highway 407 sell-off increased it to \$2.13 billion.

This fiscal year, the sales and rentals revenue line balloons to \$2.42 billion. My question is: will you admit that the \$2.42 billion in this year's budget includes some or all of the proceeds from a sale of part of Hydro One? Yes or no, Premier?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, he talks about Highway 407. He should know a lot about Highway 407; he was part of the cabinet that decided that with respect to Highway 407, a toll highway, they were going to privatize it. But the NDP's definition of privatization was that if the private sector took the highway and lost money, the government, ie the taxpayers, would pick up the losses; if they made money, they'd get to keep it all. That was your idea of privatization. Is there any wonder you're against it? Anybody could figure out that anyone would take on a highway or any other asset if they had the government underwriting the losses and they got to

keep all the profits. That was Bob Rae's solution to privatizing Highway 407.

With respect to your question about this year's budget, there are figures in the budget, of course, about commercialization of assets as we go forward, and Hydro One is definitely part of that.

Mr Hampton: Premier, I think that's an important admission. We were told yesterday by budget officials that they were counting on \$700 million, and possibly \$1 billion, in proceeds from Hydro One. They also told us something else: that proceeds from the sale of generating stations would also be included. Would you confirm for us that in that \$2.42-billion revenue line entitled "Sales and Rentals" some of the big numbers actually come from selling off hydro generating stations as well?

Hon Mr Eves: I don't believe there are any hugely significant numbers in there from the sale of OPG assets. There may be a project that has been agreed to that's in there that you'd already be aware of.

Mr Hampton: Once again, Premier, when we talked with Ministry of Finance officials yesterday, they readily admitted that the \$2.42 billion revenue line included the proceeds of selling off some of the hydro generating stations.

I guess my question to you is, will you admit to the Legislature and to the people of Ontario that, without this foolish sell-off of our most valuable public assets, your government would not have a balanced budget this year and you would not have the money to put into health care? It is only through selling off those assets that you have any money to put into health care or education.

Hon Mr Eves: We are definitely going to bring private sector discipline to Hydro One. We've said that in this House. We've said that for several days in a row.

With respect to Hydro One, though, we are not going to part with public control of the asset. It will remain in the control of the people of the province of Ontario, but there will be private sector discipline brought to bear with respect to that asset.

Mr Hampton: The only so-called private sector discipline we've seen with respect to Hydro One has been the bloated and fat salaries that mimic the private sector behaviour on Bay Street.

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I want to return to the hydro generating stations because just last week we had an opportunity to talk with some of the officials from Ontario Power Generation, who said that, in view of the recession in the United States and of the fact that generating capacity is not being totally used up there in the aftermath of the recession, if they were to try to sell their generating stations right now they would get very low prices—in fact, someone said "giveaway prices."

Your budget counts on sales and rentals of those hydro plants this year. I'm asking you, Premier, why would you

sell hydro generating stations at giveaway prices just to feed your budget?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of Energy would be happy to respond.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): "Someone." "Someone" said this to you. Could you be a little more vague?

I have not heard anyone at OPG making that suggestion. If you want to suggest to me that there are good times to sell generating power, or that generating stations have bad times, of course they do. But let me tell you, there will be no generation sales at giveaway prices; only during good negotiations. Positive decisions will be made, for the benefit of the taxpayers.

If you could illuminate this House on who the "someone" was who said that to you, maybe I would have a better ability to respond to your question.

Mr Hampton: They're the same officials from Ontario Power Generation who have provided us with briefings in the past. They indicated very clearly that, given what is happening elsewhere in the economy, you would not be able to get full value selling off hydro generating stations.

What the people of Ontario want to ask you is this: if in this budget year you have to sell off half of Hydro One or hydro generating stations in order to find some money to invest in health care, what are you going to sell off next year, the LCBO, Highway 400, Highway 401? Don't you recognize that any operation that has to sell off its assets in order to find some operating income in a given year is headed down the wrong track? That's the answer the people want to hear.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Maybe you should respond to them about the reasons why you'd sell the rolling stock at GO Transit and then attempt to lease it back through a tax haven down in the south. You never explained that one fully to the people of Ontario: why you tried to sell the rolling stock of GO and lease it through a tax haven to avoid taxes in Ontario they would have had to pay. That would have been a good one to explain.

This is beginning to sound like your letter. You went to a briefing at OPG and you didn't ask anybody their names? You didn't ask anyone who was briefing you what their name was? How do you know they were from OPG? It could have been another dream you had about meeting with OPG, similar to the letter you sent.

When you're going to ask these questions, you can't say, "They said," and "Someone told me." You've got to get a little more definitive. It's not like going to caucus.

Lastly, OPG has had a regulatory obligation to reduce its market share by decontrolling some of its generation capacity after market opening. This is essential to the creation of a competitive electricity market in Ontario. We have been up front and forward about this. They're selling this asset because we need more competition in the market. That was always the game plan.

Tomorrow, if you could get back to me with whom you met with, I'd be happy—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up.

1410

HYDRO ONE

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Premier, who I think is right here. It has to do with the issue my leader raised on the sale of assets. Just so you know the name of the person who told us yesterday, it was Mr Lindsay, in charge of the sale of Hydro One, who said that part of the \$1.8 billion of sale of assets would be Hydro One. He indicated it would be between \$700 million and \$750 million.

It's clear to us, looking at the budget, that in order to balance the budget, you required the sale of Hydro One to get revenue of \$700 million to \$750 million. Without it, there would be a deficit of that amount.

My question is this: we've heard all along that the key reason for the sale of Hydro One was to deal with the debt at Hydro. We had assumed that all the revenue from the Hydro One sale was going to that debt. Can you explain how you can use \$700 million of the sale of Hydro One to reduce your deficit?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The primary reason for dealing with Hydro One in any way, shape or form is to bring private sector discipline to the entity. Surely he wouldn't stand in this House and, in the events of the last few weeks, try to suggest to anybody that there isn't a need to bring some private sector discipline to that entity.

We've also listened to the people of Ontario, as indeed you and others have asked us to do, and we've done exactly that. The people of Ontario do not want to part with the control of that asset and we are not going to do that.

That having been said, we have also indicated that we are going to go into a public-private partnership in one entity or another, with respect to Hydro One, to bring some private sector discipline to it. The member fully understands and knows that the Provincial Auditor, on the accrual basis of accounting, makes you take into account on your books, the year in which you decide to make such a decision, any revenue that comes in on that side.

He also knows that that revenue will go to pay down Hydro debt and that for the accrual system of accounting, if you happen to make any gain, the difference will be attributed to your bottom line in that fiscal year. He knows all that. I don't know why he's asking the question.

Mr Phillips: I think the people of Ontario would like an explanation. You are selling off one of the major assets of the province of Ontario. Unless you sell off that asset, you will have a deficit of \$700 million. You've indicated to us, because the question has been raised in

the House, that the reason you want to sell Hydro One is, frankly, to deal with a mess that you created.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): That we created?

Mr Phillips: There's the Minister of Finance who created this mess. He doesn't even have to follow his own law, to delay the tax cuts, because of the mess. I say again, Premier, you are going to sell off Hydro One and use \$700 million to \$750 million to reduce the deficit, to balance the books. How can you also say that this money is going to pay down the stranded debt at Hydro? Which is it?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member knows very well how the accrual system and the cash-modified systems of accounting differ. He knows exactly what the Provincial Auditor's requirements are. To suggest that anybody on this side of the House created the September 11 problem that had the fallout for jurisdictions—including his brethren in Ottawa, I might add—is absolutely ludicrous, to say the best.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Recreation. We've heard a lot about the recent SuperBuild announcements supporting Toronto's cultural renaissance. Funding cultural projects is one part of the sports-culture-tourism partnership. Minister, what progress are we making in funding sports and recreation infrastructure?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): The government is quite pleased and proud of its capital infrastructure program, marqued under the SuperBuild sports, culture and tourism initiatives. This is a \$300-million, multi-year commitment, and we're very pleased to report to the House that to date we've received and assessed about 469 applications. Of those, 265 projects have been approved by the SuperBuild committee. We have forwarded those to the federal government.

In the last three months, we've approved investments in 219 community centres and recreational and tourism facilities across Ontario. Just a couple of examples are \$5.6 million to rehab five recreation centres in Mississauga and \$3.7 million to replace the Sault Ste Marie Memorial Gardens.

In fact, we have about 95 of these applications still sitting at the federal government level, waiting for their approval. We're very proud of our relationship with the federal government, but we're hoping we'll hear the results of the 95 applications that are pending.

Mr Miller: It is heartening that all levels of government are working together in recognizing the importance of investing in our communities.

Minister, I have an application from the Shawanaga First Nation in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. The project's intention is to refurbish and retrofit the local recreation centre, including providing accessibility for persons with disabilities. What is the government's commitment to this project?

Hon Mr Jackson: Regarding the First Nation application the member opposite is asking about, the province has committed \$47,000 to this matching-funds program. We have heard back from the federal government that they have rejected the application. They have rejected five First Nations projects including Lac La Croix First Nation in Kenora, Anishinaabeg in Kenora, Shawanaga in Parry Sound-Muskoka and Billings and Cobourn Island in Algoma-Manitoulin. These were occupational health and safety applications under the government's program, and unfortunately I have correspondence from the federal government that they are rejecting these applications.

I do want to let all members of the opposition know that tonight at 6 o'clock I will be providing a full briefing for all members of the Liberal and NDP caucuses on each and every one of their individual applications. I encourage them to attend this briefing session so that they have a status report on all their applications.

This is a very good program that reaches all communities in our province.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education. I want to ask about your part of yesterday's budget, because your part of yesterday's budget fails our kids. You know, by looking at that budget, that it's \$150 million less than you advertise when it comes to your second set of books. But more important, the teachers and parents are telling us it is far less than they need. School boards would say it's less than half of what they need not to cut important services.

Minister, Cath Done, in your own home district of Waterloo, says she finds horrifying what special-needs kids have to face. They were counting on you.

Our leader and I put together a plan and put it forward to you ahead of the budget. Despite the failure of yesterday, it's never too late to do the right thing. You can provide for these kids, you can have a moratorium on school closings—good schools that need to stay open—and you can help kids who need to catch up with the curriculum. Will you stand up today and tell us what you're really prepared to do on behalf of the kids you helped to let down yesterday?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): In response to the question, I would just remind the member opposite of the tremendous and very significant investment we have made in education in the last two months. In response to the requests of people in this province, we have not only now increased and announced about 557 million new dollars for education, but we have also responded to the requests to review the funding formula.

We have Dr Rozanski, who will be embarking on consultations, supported by an advisory council and an expert panel. His recommendations will allow us to review the funding formula in order to ensure that we are

meeting the needs of students. No government has ever, in such a short period of time, done more for the education of children in this province.

1420

Mr Kennedy: It won't surprise you, Minister, to know there are people who disagree with you: people like Joe King, a parent at Cedarbrae Public School in Waterloo who has a child who can't wait for you to sort through some of your funny numbers and some of the rhetoric you're serving up today; or Sharon Blomfield, a teacher who is struggling, hoping there will be something coming forward from your government to help the special-needs kids she's sacrificing for.

You had a chance to do more, to cancel the tax credit for private schools—\$70 million could have been available. In each of the different books you've put forward, there was more money for kids the year before than there is this year.

On behalf of Mr King, Ms Blomfield, Ms Done and their children, I want to ask you: will you agree, as you might have at one time as chair of the Waterloo board, for these kids in that very same district who are disappointed today—who have to be, because there is nothing that will help their situation. Some 63 educational assistants stand to be laid off in the Waterloo district alone. Minister, will you stand up today on their behalf and say you will cancel the private school tax credit and put that \$70 million—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up.

Hon Mrs Witmer: It's truly unbelievable, when there is an investment by a government of \$557 million in education, that someone would stand up—only a Liberal would speak as you are speaking. It's unbelievable.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Take your seat. The member for Parkdale-High Park, come to order, please. The minister waited patiently while you asked the question. She didn't interrupt you.

Interjection.

The Speaker: To the member for Parkdale-High Park who isn't even listening now, the minister waited patiently while you put the question; you even went over the minute. It's only fair that you now let her answer the question. Sorry, Minister.

Hon Mrs Witmer: We are providing \$14.2 billion to the educational system in this province. We have responded to the issues that have been brought to our attention. We are reviewing the funding formula. We have provided an increase of 2.9% this year, despite the fact that enrolment growth is only 0.4% and the economy has grown only 1%. A 2.9% increase in funding is very significant.

BRUCE PENINSULA

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. On the weekend, the minister was in Grey count-

and celebrated our 150th anniversary with us. Unfortunately, he met with a reporter, and in our local paper the minister mentioned there would be no designation for the Bruce Peninsula for northern development. He also mentioned this was nonsense. I would like the minister to explain today to the people in the Bruce Peninsula, from Wiarton to Tobermory, why he would utter these things in the paper and say there would be no designation for the Bruce Peninsula.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I want to thank the honourable member for his question and for giving me an opportunity to apologize to him and to the people of the Bruce Peninsula, from Wiarton to Tobermory. I of all people should have known better than to say what I said, given that I live up in that part of the world too. Clearly I didn't even know until yesterday, and I can assure you I now know very well, that Mr Murdoch introduced a bill two years ago, because he feels so strongly about this on behalf of his constituents, to include that part of Ontario in the boundaries of northern Ontario.

I will tell the honourable member, though, that the boundaries include only district municipalities. The district of Parry Sound and the municipality of Muskoka were the last ones added to the boundary of northern Ontario. That has been what the province has used to guide it in its decision-making on where these boundaries should be. Counties and regular municipalities are not included in northern Ontario, but district municipalities are. That's been the reasoning to date, but there's no reason the honourable member shouldn't continue to try to change that reasoning.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Say you accept his apology. Say, "I accept his apology."

Mr Murdoch: That was sort of an answer. I appreciate it and I accept the apology from the minister. I'm glad he mentioned the Muskokas; I was maybe going to say something about that, but it was in there and they have been included. They are actually a little more southern than the Bruce Peninsula so I would like him to take another look at this some time. I'm certain he will work with me on that and with the people on the Bruce Peninsula.

Mr Minister, I'm looking for your support, and I hope you can tell us in the House today that you will certainly work with me on this problem.

Hon Mr Wilson: Listen, I'll say to the honourable member, if there was a crow flying by I'd eat it. But the fact of the matter is I apologize to him again and will definitely work with him.

I just want to remind him though that if we were to include those parts of the province that aren't districts, we'd also be taking in places like the city of Ottawa, Cornwall, Perth, Brockville, Midland and Orillia. I'm not sure how much fun he would really be left with for the true north. But I will work with him. He's like a dog with a bone, and if I don't work with him I can't go back home, frankly.

PRIVATE CLINICS

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Premier. Premier, your budget yesterday opens the door to even more for-profit delivery of health care and New Democrats believe this will come at the expense of patient care. That is because health care dollars which should go fully and completely into patient care end up being diverted into profits for the providers. Unlike Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals, New Democrats do not support private, for-profit clinics offering MRI or CAT scan services.

Premier, will you stop going down the road of for-profit health care and will you commit to funding health services where every dollar does go into patient care?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'm sure the honourable member is aware that about a third of health care dollars being spent today are at for-profit entities that are providing vital and necessary services to the people across this country, but we do it through the universally accessible health care system in the country and the province. We will continue to look for ways to make health care more accessible for everybody regardless of their ability to pay, and if that includes private clinics, it includes private clinics.

Ms Martel: Premier, you know full well that as a result of the budget yesterday your government will now be looking at for-profit clinics to deliver both MRI and CAT scan services. New Democrats are convinced that the opening of those for-profit clinics will come at the expense of patient care. We believe that because we know that when health care dollars go into the public sector they are used directly for patient care. When public health care dollars go into for-profit clinics, some of that money goes into profit, not fully into patient care.

I ask you again, Premier, in light of the budget announcements yesterday, will you stop going down the road to even more for-profit delivery of health care and will you commit to using public health dollars for public services, where every cent does go into patient care?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, as the honourable member well knows, we made a very significant commitment to health care yesterday by an increase of \$1.7 billion more being spent on health care in this province this year than was spent last year. That's up considerably from the \$17.6 billion being spent when we assumed office in the 1995-96 fiscal year. She also knows that will lead to improved services for all Ontarians.

You told us the same thing when we talked about kidney dialysis and treatment. Now we have private clinics providing kidney dialysis to 23 more communities than we did before. If we can do the same thing for MRIs or any other diagnostic or treatment procedure, more power to us because more Ontarians will be helped.

**GOVERNMENT
ACCOUNTING PRACTICES**

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): To the Premier: in 1995, Premier, you quite loudly said—and you will remember this statement—you were putting an end to the two sets of books in the province of Ontario. You will know that yesterday your government tabled two sets of books again. Seven years later we still have dramatically different numbers. As a matter of fact, the expenditure estimates here, which are the official documents that, according to the government, give approval to the ministries to spend, have in some cases a \$400-million difference for the Ministry of Health and a \$600-million difference for Management Board.

My question, Premier, is this: you promised in 1995 to get rid of the two sets of books. Here we are now seven years later; we still have two sets of books. Why did you break your promise that you made in 1995?

1430

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I refer the question to the Minister of Finance. She'll be happy to answer it.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): As the member well knows, we made that commitment, we are indeed moving to meet that commitment. Yesterday's budget announced that we will be doing that at the end of this fiscal year. He may well think it's something where you can snap your fingers and this occurs. It wasn't something they were concerned about when they were in power. Two sets of books? They were quite happy to have them. This government is delivering on the commitment we made.

Mr Phillips: It wasn't I who made this promise; it was Ernie Eves. It wasn't when he became Premier; it was in 1995. He said, "We're going to get rid of this terrible two sets of books." So don't get mad at me; get mad at him. He didn't do it.

Minister, if you look at the expenditures—this is the official document that gives legal authority to spend: Management Board, a \$600-million difference between these two sets of books, both tabled yesterday; and the Ministry of Health, a \$400-million difference. We have these two entirely different sets of books. It was Mr Eves, then Minister of Finance in 1995, who made this promise. It wasn't to be done overnight. It's seven years later; it's still not done.

Why would anybody in Ontario have confidence when you're asking us to vote on two different sets of books: approve this set of books for spending and this set for the budget? Why would the people of Ontario have any confidence in that, Minister?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The people of Ontario have been looking at two sets of books for years and years and years, and you didn't think it was important. Your government didn't do anything about it; the NDP didn't do anything about it. We are—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Sorry, Minister, take your seat. Come to order. Sorry, Minister. Continue.

Hon Mrs Ecker: It's OK. I answered.

BARBECUE SAFETY

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. Minister, as weekend weather is improving across our province, more and more Ontarians will be inviting friends over for summer barbecues. In my riding and ridings all across the province, the backyard barbecue is becoming a tradition right across our province. This is also the time of the year when barbecue-related injuries are most likely to happen.

I'm sure you will agree that it is important that we do everything we can to be protected from the obvious dangers that are presented by propane tanks. I know that your ministry has a number of safety programs in place. Minister, could you explain to the members here today some of those programs and what they actually are?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I appreciate the question from the member. Simcoe North is often referred to as the barbecue capital of Ontario. Actually, by coincidence, I was just recently joined by Norm Miller, the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, Joe Tascona from Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton and Bob Wood from London West to highlight a new program called the Start Smart safety program for barbecues as we enter the summer season, done by the Technical Standards and Safety Authority out of the ministry. As part of that fundraiser as well we raised about \$300 for Federated Health, an important charity supporting health causes in the province.

The program encourages us to check for leaks in our gas lines, cleaning spiders and other insects from our burners, and to cover a lot of important ground. No doubt, by placing safety at the front of the grill this program is keeping Ontarians safe and helping us avoid getting in hot water around the barbecue this summer.

Interjections.

Mr Dunlop: Minister, that sounds like a great program and I'm interested that the members opposite wouldn't want to know more about barbecuing accidents. However, sometimes accidents actually do occur and people may not know what steps to take.

Interjections.

Mr Dunlop: Isn't it interesting to hear about the chirping over there from the member from wherever he's from? Every year I read about propane lines and explosions that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member take his seat. Sorry to interrupt him. Come to order. The member's asking his question.

I apologize. The member for Simcoe North.

Mr Dunlop: It's an excellent question, and I'm really concerned that they don't want to hear the question.

If someone finds himself in a dangerous situation, then the right information and tools can mean the difference between slight inconvenience and serious injury or even death.

What can my constituents and people right across this province do to keep themselves out of dangerous situations while having a friendly family barbecue in our lovely summers here in the province of this beautiful Ontario?

Hon Mr Hudak: It's an excellent question by the member, especially as we head into the summer season.

I think the most important piece of advice is to try to keep a cool head in a hot situation; it will produce the best results. Obviously if there's a serious incident such as a propane tank explosion or any kind of injury from that, then they should contact their local emergency services immediately. For minor accidents, it's very good to keep a fire extinguisher close by in case a rogue hamburger or overzealous sirloin gets out of control, I'd say to the member. But prevention is obviously the best defence against getting trouble around the barbecue.

We have a Start Smart barbecue season brochure we're giving out. They can reach the TSSA directly to ask for this safety tips magazine at 1-800-682-TSSA or at their Web site, www.public-safety-first.com.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, you raised the spectre of September 11 yesterday. Of course September 11 was not primarily an economic moment; it was a violent breach of public security and safety, rendering untold victims of crime. And yet, somehow in the name of September 11, not only did you shelve some economic promises but you've also put on the shelf victims of crime and public safety.

How can you justify, in the wake of September 11, the massive cuts announced yesterday to the operating budgets of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Ministry of Public Safety and Security?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): The tragic events of September 11, the aftermath of those events, hit not only the Ontario economy and our bottom line but economies around the world. We saw significant drops in our revenues, we saw significant drops in our growth, and that put us in the position we talked about with the difficult choices we made to make sure that we were balancing the budget, that we were investing in important priorities like health, like education, like the environment, like making sure we move forward with economic growth and prosperity moves such as further tax cuts. That's what we've moved forward with in this budget. Those are the priorities that we have. We will continue to make the choices that Ontarians want us to make.

Mr Bryant: Look, you're the government that has talked tough about crime for the last seven years. You're the government that merged the Ministry of the Solicitor General with Corrections, put it in Public Safety and

Security, put in Sheriff Bob Runciman and tried to look tough on crime. You're the government that had reams of photo ops with victims of crime. You're the government that cut the justice ministries by nearly \$90 million, and you, Madam Minister, must be held to account.

The Minister of Public Safety and Security couldn't figure out what a sleeper cell was, and now Ontarians are losing sleep because you've cut more than \$70 million from his budget. You came clean on promises made and broken on the economic front. Now will you come clean on promises made and broken to victims past, victims present and victims future?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The Minister of Public Safety will answer that.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): There have been no cuts to our budget. There have been removals with respect to one-time funding. I could go over those. With integrated justice, there were some expenditures related to correctional institutions and some technology expenditures related to justice initiatives.

I don't believe any jurisdiction in this country has responded in a more activist manner in response to the September 11 incidents than this government of the province of Ontario, the Ernie Eves government.

If you take a look at the record of the Harris and Eves government over the past seven years, no government in this country, and certainly not the federal Liberal government, has dealt in such a positive way in terms of addressing concerns of Canadians and Ontarians with respect to justice issues. We don't only talk tough, we deliver. And we have delivered.

1440

ALTERNATIVE FUEL

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. I was very pleased yesterday, when listening to the budget speech, that this government has focused on new solutions in developments in the biotech sector. If I recall correctly, the section in the budget referred to biodiesel. Certainly this will help the agricultural sector in my riding of Durham. As a member of the alternative fuels committee—and we just filed a report a week or two ago—I commend you on your responsiveness to an important policy area.

Minister, perhaps for the members listening today you can explain how this important decision will affect the innovative practices in the agricultural communities in my riding.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Let me say that yesterday was truly a good day for agriculture, for the environment and for innovation in Ontario. What happened yesterday was that we gave a tax break to the biodiesel industry. This industry is innovative and environmentally friendly. It's their proposal to use renewable fuels from agricultural products to create biodiesel in the province. Up until this point we have just been purchasing biodiesel from other countries.

What is happening now is that we're going to create our own industry in Ontario. We're going to be able to use excess supply that is out there from soya and dead animal renderings. We're going to take those products and create biodiesel in the province.

The exciting thing about this is that it's good for the environment, it's good for agriculture and it's good for innovation.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that, Minister. It's great to see a collaborative effort between you, Minister Flaherty and Minister Ecker, working to have innovative tax policies that address our environment and our economy. It's clearly a win-win situation for the people of Ontario. But, more important, it's an important win for my agricultural community.

These kinds of innovative plans that you've encouraged by this tax policy will have greater implications. I'm familiar with the presentation made by Biox, in the industry. I'm very familiar with the president, Tim Haig, and Kevin Norton, the engineer, who made an excellent presentation to the alternative fuels committee.

Minister, can you tell me the outflow of this important decision that you and Minister Ecker have made?

Hon Mrs Johns: I need to correct the record, because the Ministry of Environment and the Minister of Innovation have also been involved in this.

Let me say that as it stands today, Ontario does not produce any biodiesel. In fact, we import about 300,000 litres a year. As a result of this exemption that we received yesterday, we will be able to create that product right here in Ontario.

I was pleased to see the people from Biox here yesterday. They stated that Biox will proceed with establishing a biodiesel fabricating plant in Ontario to export this technology to the world. It's a wonderful opportunity, and everyone came together to ensure that this happened.

I, like you, want to thank the alternative fuels committee and everyone else involved. This truly will help agriculture and the biotechnology industry continue to be a leader in Ontario and a leader across Canada and the world. I know that Ontario will be, as it truly should be, the place where you want to live, work and raise your family.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT FUND

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday you introduced the so-called student achievement fund, where you said you would give \$5,000 for every elementary school which meets and/or exceeds the student literacy goal, ie, which passes the standardized tests.

Here's the problem—and, by the way, I find this particularly offensive—if I live in a neighbourhood where the parents bring the monetary advantages and/or academic privileges, the kids are likely to do well and therefore that principal is going to get \$5,000 to throw around. If I live in a neighbourhood where parents and schools are confronted by issues of poverty and learning

problems, that means those kids are likely not to do well in that literacy test, and that means they're not going to get the \$5,000. How can you claim that your Student Achievement Fund is doing anything other than hurting kids who need the help most?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): We'll have in the student achievement fund about \$20 million. I just want the member opposite to know that we will be working in co-operation with our education partners on the design of the program, in order to ensure that there is effective implementation at the school level. I will be certainly providing further details at a later date.

Mr Marchese: I would like the minister to know that she is dividing our kids into winners and losers. I would like the minister to know that yesterday she announced she will give \$5,000 to every elementary school principal whose school meets or exceeds the student literacy goals in grade 3—that's what she announced yesterday. She's dividing our schools and our students into winners and losers. It's based on the assumption that all schools face the same problems, that what works in a school where a majority of the parents are university educated and have lots of money also works in a school where many of the parents may be refugees, recent immigrants, may be coming from poor homes—that they work in the same way.

Minister, why would you wilfully disadvantage those who need your help the most?

Hon Mrs Witmer: During the past few years parents have indicated to us that they want us to focus on the early reading skills of the students in our schools. We have been moving forward with an early reading strategy, we have invested a considerable amount of money, and this is additional money in order to encourage, support and work with the schools in helping them to meet or exceed the goals that have been set.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Some of the bravest, most wonderful people I've met in my term in office have been Ontarians with disabilities. However, they are struggling financially in this province. Last week you and most of your colleagues voted against a bill that would have given them a very slight increase to reflect the cost of living—not retroactive, barely enough to get by.

Obviously you believe that the maximum of \$930 a month is adequate. I challenge you to live the words that you're stating. I challenge you to live for one month on \$930—not a penny more, no money borrowed from anyone. Minister, will you accept that challenge if you truly believe that they are making adequate compensation?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I'm interested to receive this

question from my colleague from across the way. Our government has taken action to help individuals with disabilities in the province of Ontario that neither the NDP nor the Liberal government did. When we reformed the welfare system and created Ontario Works, an opportunity for a hand up, not a handout, we allowed people who had disabilities to enter into a specialized program. For the first time we listened to the people who had disabilities in the province of Ontario and gave them a very special program with a number of distinctions apart from welfare. We are the government that introduced the Ontario Disabilities Act, something that neither the Liberals nor the NDP government had the courage to do. If there's any government that understands people with disabilities and works hard to better their lives, it is this government.

1450

Mr Parsons: A deaf, blind individual in a wheelchair needs our help and is entitled to our help for the sake of humanity. You have that responsibility as a leader. What I heard clearly is that you will not accept the challenge, because you know—you really know—that you could not live on \$930 a month.

Minister, show some leadership. These are full Ontario citizens who are unable to buy groceries or pay rent. While your cabinet costs have increased by 117% over the life of this government since 1995, you have given people with disabilities zero, zip, nothing. Ignore the rhetoric. For once, do the right thing. Will you commit to an increase for people on ODSP that will allow them to meet their basic needs—their simple, basic needs?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I find this an interesting line of questioning from my colleague across the way, whose own caucus colleague asked a similar question in this Legislature last week, while at the same time asking for an increase in her personal apartment allowance, speaking in one voice here and in quite another somewhere else.

On this side of the House, we care deeply about making sure we can take action to help people with disabilities in this province. I take that commitment very seriously, and we have undertaken many initiatives.

You asked me if there's more to do. I say yes, there is more to do, and we will indeed do that.

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): On a point of order, Speaker: In the spirit of fairness to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, I happened to watch him on Focus Ontario on Saturday. He indicated that he wished we would defer some tax cuts and, if we did, he would eat a small hat. So we have done him the favour of providing that hat.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In fairness, I thought they'd stick with the law. I didn't realize they'd break the law, so I'm going to eat a part of this. I just thought they were going to stick with the law.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): As you know, it is also breaking the rules of the House to bring in props. I'm tempted to ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to bring the

prop down to the Speaker's office and bring his sword and maybe a fork.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You have to give them credit. When else have you seen the news media here in such great numbers at the end of question period? I hope this is a precedent.

The Speaker: They probably think they're going to get some cake.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Out of the question the member from Scarborough-Agincourt raised in regard to the two sets of books, I sit on the estimates committee, and what I'm to deal with, I understand—do I have to deal with the fact that I have to examine the estimates under these numbers, or should I deal with the numbers coming from the budget? I need your guidance on that.

The Speaker: I'm afraid I can't give you that guidance. It's not a point of order.

PETITIONS

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralizing children's heart surgery in Toronto would force patients and their families to travel between 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and ensure that top-quality accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

I'll be happy to add my signature to this petition.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ernie Eves 2002 budget proves he'll say anything to hold on to power and is trying to run away from his own record;

"Whereas Ernie Eves's budget fails to deliver what Ontario families need, like a moratorium on school closures and a real cap on class sizes in the early years;

"Whereas the private school tax voucher should be cancelled, not delayed, and that money put into public classrooms;

"Whereas the \$2.2-billion corporate tax giveaway should be cancelled, not delayed;

"Whereas Ontario families are looking for real, positive change and only Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party represent that change;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to tell Ernie Eves to put Ontario working families first and cancel the corporate tax" giveaway "and cancel the private school tax voucher."

I sign my name on this and give it to Jordan.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition here in regard to the very important issue of hydro deregulation. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned residents of Toronto, demand that the government immediately stop the process of privatizing our electricity transmission system, the network of steel towers, transformers and wooden poles which transmit power from generating plants to our homes, and further postpone the electricity deregulation process until the Ontario public is given proof that privatization will not result in price increases, and place a moratorium on any further retailing of electricity until the Ontario Energy Board comes up with a standard contract to be used by all retailers; and

"That a standard contract spell out in clear terms that residential users are waiving their rights to future rebates in exchange for fixed rates over a specified period of time."

Since I agree, I sign my name to it.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario will be considering a private member's bill that aims to amend the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases; and

"Whereas optometrists are highly trained and equipped with the knowledge and specialized instrumentation needed to effectively diagnose and treat certain eye problems; and

"Whereas extending the authority to prescribe TPAs to optometrists will help relieve the demands on ophthalmologists and physicians who currently have the exclusive domain for prescribing TPAs to optometry patients; and

"Whereas the bill introduced by New Democrat Peter Kormos (MPP—Niagara Centre) will ensure that patients receive prompt, timely, one-stop care where appropriate;

"Therefore I do support the bill proposing an amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases and I urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage of the bill."

I have affixed my signature as well.

HIGHWAY 522

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We, the taxpayers, members of the communities and the people who have to travel on Highway 522 in the district of Parry Sound, want to bring to your attention the poor condition of Highway 522."

I support this petition and sign my name.

1500

AIR QUALITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Eves government's wholly owned Nanticoke generating station is North America's largest dirty coal-fired electricity producing plant and Ontario's largest producer of the chemicals and acid gases which contribute to deadly smog and acid rain; and

"Whereas the Nanticoke plant, which has more than doubled its dangerous emissions under the Conservative government, is now the worst air polluter in all of Canada, spewing out over five million kilograms of toxic chemicals each year, including many cancer-causing chemicals and mercury, a potent and dangerous neurotoxin; and

"Whereas at least 13 Ontario municipalities and seven northeastern US states have expressed concerns that Ontario Power Generation's proposed cleanup plan for Nanticoke is inadequate in protecting the air quality and health and safety of their residents; and

"Whereas the Ontario Medical Association has stated that 1,900 Ontarians die prematurely each year and we pay \$1 billion annually in health-related costs as a result of air pollution; and

"Whereas, because the Conservative government has now lifted the moratorium on the sale of coal-fired power plants and has set a date for deregulation of electricity, the operator of the Nanticoke plant will likely stoke up production to maximize profits, which will only worsen the air quality in cities like Toronto, Hamilton, Welland, Niagara Falls and St Catharines;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Ernie Eves government immediately order that the Nanticoke generating

station be converted from dirty coal to cleaner-burning natural gas."

I affix my signature. I am in complete agreement with this petition.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralizing children's heart surgery in Toronto will force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and to ensure that top-quality, accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

I do sign this petition also.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ernie Eves 2002 budget proves he'll say anything to hold on to power and is trying to run away from his own record;

"Whereas Ernie Eves's budget fails to deliver what Ontario families need, like a moratorium on school closures and a real cap on class sizes in the early years;

"Whereas the private school tax voucher should be cancelled, not delayed, and that money put into public classrooms;

"Whereas the \$2.2 billion corporate tax giveaway should be cancelled, not delayed;

"Whereas Ontario families are looking for real, positive change and only Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party represent that change;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to tell Ernie Eves to put Ontario working families first, cancel the corporate tax cut and cancel the private school voucher."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

ALTERNATIVE FUEL

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has a tradition of bold environmental initiatives; and

"Whereas the select committee on alternative fuels was given a mandate to investigate and recommend ways of reducing Ontario's dependence on fossil fuels while expanding access to environmentally friendly sustainable energy; and

"Whereas the select committee on alternative fuels has recommended the following:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement all of the 141 recommendations of the select committee on alternative fuels made in their final report tabled June 5, 2002. Full details of these recommendations are attached and form part of this petition.

"(1) The Ontario government shall develop an alternative fuel and energy strategy to establish a framework for a coordinated approach to: (a) increase the use of renewable energy and fuel sources in both the immediate and long term; (b) reduce Ontario's reliance upon carbon-based fuel sources; (c) reduce adverse impacts upon the environment; (d) ensure that the relative cost of different energy sources, fiscal implications, energy security, impact on job creation, export development and the provincial economy are all considered; (e) support innovative research and development in the alternative energy fields that yield long-term economic, environmental and social benefits; (f) and ensure that energy conservation and efficiency are improved.

"(2) The Ministry of Environment and Energy shall be the lead in formulating an Ontario alternative fuel/energy strategy. Other pertinent ministries and agencies shall be consulted including: enterprise, opportunity and innovation; agriculture and food; training, colleges, and universities; education; finance; Management Board; municipal affairs and housing; natural resources; native affairs; northern development and mines; transportation; Ontario Power Generation; Hydro One and/or successor companies; Ontario Energy Board; Independent Electricity Market Operator; and Natural Resources Canada. A co-ordinating branch shall be established within the Ministry of Environment and Energy to deal with alternative fuel/energy policy and programs. An independent technical advisory group reporting to the Minister of Environment and Energy shall be appointed to advise on alternative fuel/energy technologies and levels of assistance to individual technologies.

"(3) An Ontario Energy Research Institute shall be established by March 1, 2003, to advance the manufacture and use of alternative fuel and energy products in Ontario. The institute should have responsibility for oversight of all alternative fuel/energy projects and be a schedule 3 agency reporting to the Ministry of Environment and Energy. It should have an annual budget of \$40 million and a guaranteed minimum 10-year lifespan. Its

functions should include: policy development and implementation, including product specifications and standards in conjunction with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority; development of partnerships with the private sector and post-secondary institutions; testing of technologies at a demonstration site, with a \$10-million funding commitment over three years; development of an educational program, including a comprehensive Web site and alternative fuels/energy component within the elementary and secondary—”

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the member take his seat, please? The petition, as you know, when it gets stamped—the front page is the petition you read. When I see you flipping pages I know you've gone past the petition that was stamped by the House. When you're flipping page after page, the petition is too long. I'll give you a little bit of time to wrap it up.

It is a point of order, but that is the rule, and I've stated very clearly: you've got the front page, and when you're flipping pages you're reaching for the addendum. I'll give you a little bit of leeway, but rest assured that the petition can't go on that long.

Mr Gilchrist: On the point of order, Mr Speaker: I did in fact clarify with the table the format of this report. The problem is that the wording of the standing orders would seem to preclude longer preambles than perhaps are typically found, although many times we've seen petitions go on ad nauseam, in particular on the other side.

The problem with the construction is that we seem to be challenged between the need to present a point and the fact that the rules say there must be a signature on the front page. So any time you're advancing a more complex position than might be found in one, two or three sentences, you cannot in fact present the body of the petition, and yet people are supposedly signing on to something.

Normally, I would think the construction would be that it's the last page you would have somebody to sign after they've read an entire document. If you sign a contract or do something at your bank, of course you read the whole thing through and you sign it at the end.

The table advised me that under the rules right now it would seem a contradiction that you ask people to sign in advance for what then has to follow. I would ask you to contrast a ruling of your predecessor, Mr Stockwell, when I raised a similar point back in 1997. At the time, there had been considerable abuse of the standing orders. I would think the rule that suggests a brief comment, which has not changed since then, has never had any kind of parameters put around the definition of “brief.”

The petition I am presenting is to endorse 141 different recommendations that form a comprehensive report. To ask somebody to sign off on one or two or three is not appropriate if they want to endorse all 141. I would ask, Mr Speaker, how you could reconcile the need to sign up front with the fact that people have to sign something more comprehensive.

I would be more than happy to reconstruct the petition in such a way that the signature falls at the end. However, the table tells me we have this problem with construction, and I would seek direction from you, Mr Speaker, on how we could resolve this apparent contradiction in the standing orders.

The Speaker: I thank the member very much. The reason the text is on there is so that people actually sign what they are reading. If you had it on one page where they're signing on other pages, you could have a situation where people could slip things through. That's why it's done. We have the standing orders that say it has to be on the same page. That's what we're going to live by. If we ever want to change them, we can do that.

Having said that, the one thing where we don't get political, other than the goings-on, is petitions. The members are given some leeway. If we start getting into situations like that, where members on all sides do it, we potentially could have one petition for one member, and I don't think we would want that, because that is not what the intention was. I know that some members go a little bit longer and I give some leeway, but we're not going to allow them to do it. The rules are very clear and we're going to stick with them.

It has to be signatures on that page, and you're not going to be able to read addendums. I will say this very clearly: now that we are aware, we are going to watch for people flipping pages. If you do that, then you are out of order and we're not going to let you continue.

1510

SERVICES DE SANTÉ POUR ENFANTS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): J'ai une pétition avec 134 noms que m'a fait parvenir Fleurette Lalande de Vankleek Hill, une personne qui est concernée par le peu d'attention apportée à la santé de nos enfants de l'est ontarien.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que le gouvernement de l'Ontario est en train de fermer le service de chirurgie cardiaque à l'intention des enfants fonctionnant actuellement à l'hôpital pour les enfants de l'est de l'Ontario;

« Attendu que la fermeture de ce programme restreindrait l'accès des enfants de l'est de l'Ontario à cette chirurgie, qui sauve des vies;

« Attendu que CHEO traite chaque année 140 enfants gravement malades à proximité de leur foyer;

« Attendu que la centralisation des services de chirurgie cardiaque pour les enfants à Toronto obligerait les patients et leurs parents à s'éloigner de 400 kilomètres à 600 kilomètres de leur foyer à un moment difficile;

« Attendu qu'il y a une liste d'attente pour les chirurgies cardiaques à Toronto mais pas » pour l'hôpital pour les enfants de l'est de l'Ontario;

« Attendu qu'une partie du personnel de ce programme de CHEO parle français et que, de ce fait, la population francophone a accès à des conseils médicaux de qualité supérieure en français;

« Attendu que la population de l'est de l'Ontario exige des soins de santé de qualité et accessibles pour ses enfants,

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'annuler immédiatement la décision du gouvernement d'abolir ce programme, qui sauve des vies, et de veiller à ce que chaque enfant de l'est de l'Ontario continue d'avoir pleinement accès à des soins de santé de qualité supérieure. »

J'y ajoute ma signature.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition deals with the double cohort and it's from the College Student Alliance.

“Whereas by eliminating the fifth year of high school the government of Ontario has created a double cohort of students; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has promised that there will be a space at a university or college for every willing and qualified student; and

“Whereas Ontario's universities and colleges have not received sufficient funding from the government of Ontario to accommodate these double cohort students; and

“Whereas the quality of education at Ontario's universities and colleges has been declining in recent years; and

“Whereas the double cohort students will add an additional strain on an already fragile university and college system;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: provide full funding for every new student entering Ontario's universities and colleges; provide additional funding to increase quality at Ontario's universities and colleges; provide targeted funding to colleges for skills and innovation; and increase the per student funding to the national average over the next five years.”

I affix my signature to this petition, as I am in full agreement with it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2002 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I wish to move the following amendment:

I move an amendment to the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on June 17, which I will read as follows:

“That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government” be amended by deleting the words after “that this House” and adding thereto the following: “recognize the fact that Ernie Eves will say

anything to hold on to power, since the budget contradicts everything Ernie Eves has said for the past seven years; does nothing to keep schools open, lower and cap class sizes or support our children with special needs; cynically promises to both keep and sell Hydro One; desperately pledges to both implement and delay corporate tax cuts and miraculously supports and opposes private school tax credits simultaneously. Therefore, this House has lost confidence in this government.”

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We will just take one moment if we could, please.

What we are going to do is allow the member to introduce his speech. He will recognize that in his amendment he has referred to the member Ernie Eves. He needs to refer to the member based on his riding or as Premier. He can begin his speech, and we will ask that you work with the table to make some of the changes to that amendment. I would also caution the member that we have said on occasion that you can't say anything regarding another member, and he may want to take a look at the first line in that amendment. Having said that, using a member's personal name is definitely out of order.

We will give you some time, allow you to do your speech, and during that period of time you can move an amendment at any point in time.

The leader of the official opposition.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): It's below you, Dalton.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): No lectures from over there. No lectures from that government.

The Speaker: Order. Minister, come to order, please. The leader of the official opposition has a very important speech to make. There are members who do a lot of things. We just remain cool. The leader of the official opposition has the floor.

Mr McGuinty: Thank you, Speaker.

I want to begin today by expressing my profound sympathy to the members opposite. Going through an identity crisis is not pleasant; those of us who went through an identity crisis in high school can attest to that. And yesterday's budget—let's be perfectly clear—is an identity crisis put down on paper for the whole world to see.

This government knows what it wants to be; it just doesn't have the courage to admit it. It wants to be the same bunch that has spent seven years slashing and burning and laying waste to the institutions that Ontario families rely on. The problem is that Mr Eves knows full well that Ontario voters aren't going to put up with that same bunch any longer.

Yesterday's budget is the government's way of pretending to be something it's not while pretending to be, well, a little bit more like us. The way they see it, they only have to keep up this pretence for a year or so, and then after the election they can take off those uncomfortable disguises and get back to doing what they do best. The people of Ontario are not going to be fooled by this particularly cynical strategy. The working families of Ontario are not going to be fooled.

Before the budget, we set a simple test for this government to pass. It was a way for the Premier to show that he really had changed, that he really does care about Ontario's working families. We challenged the government to cancel any sale of Hydro One either in whole or in part; we urged the government to spend \$300 million on an interim education program to help kids now; and we pressed the government to cancel the \$2-billion corporate tax giveaway and the \$500-million tax credit for private schools. Clearly this government has failed these basic tests.

You have to read the document pretty carefully—this is clearly something this government is not particularly proud of—but the fact is they are counting on nearly a billion dollars from a partial sale of Hydro One. Without that money, this crack fiscal management team across the way will be running a deficit. The last thing this government wants with an election looming is a deficit, so what do they do? Well, they sell something. They sell something big, and they sell something big, fast. They did that in the case of Highway 407, to the continuing regret of both users and Ontario taxpayers, and now they're going to do it with Hydro One. Once again we're going to have a Tory triumph of politics over principle.

1520

There still hasn't been a business case produced to justify selling any part of Hydro One, nor is there a public policy rationale for doing so. But my friends opposite need some cash to fund their coming election promises, and that, in and of itself, is more than sufficient reason from their perspective. Again I say the people of Ontario will not be fooled by this cynical strategy.

Funding for education fell well short of what is needed, meaning that because of the disastrous funding formula, kids will continue to pay the price and schools will continue to close.

On the corporate tax cut and private school tax credit, those aren't going to happen until next year. That's right. They seem to admit that these things are a bad idea. They know how bad it would look to spend a half-billion dollars on private schools when public schools are in crisis. They know the people of Ontario have had it up to here with the idea of \$2 billion for large corporations while health care and education are reeling from seven years of attacks and mismanagement.

We don't need further corporate tax cuts. Ontario's tax rates are perfectly competitive with most US states, and in fact you'll find that very evidence on page 81 of yesterday's budget. The government knows perfectly well that the people of Ontario want other things done with their money; they have other priorities. But are they cancelling these things: the private school tax credit, the corporate tax cut? Are they saying, "You're right, those are bad ideas; we won't do them"? No. They lack the courage, the principles, the conviction and the integrity to do that. They're just putting them off for a while, hoping that people will forget about them until after they're safely re-elected. Well, we won't forget about them, and the people of Ontario will not be fooled.

The next election is going to offer Ontarians a very clear choice, and this government doesn't like that. The choice will be between a Liberal Party that will fight for working families and the Ernie Eves government, which only ever thinks about working families when they're looking for votes. The choice will be between a Liberal Party that has a clear policy on Hydro One—it's not for sale—and the Ernie Eves government, which has changed its policy so many times, it can't remember where it first began. The choice will be between a Liberal Party that understands we must invest in public education and the Ernie Eves government, which would rather give money to private schools. The choice will be between a Liberal Party that knows it is wrong to go ahead with a \$2-billion corporate tax cut and the Ernie Eves government, which also knows that but is determined to do it anyway.

This government knows that, faced with a choice like that, the people of Ontario will show them the door, and that's what is behind yesterday's budget.

Yesterday's budget is all about holding on to power, nothing more and nothing less. It's about paying lip service to decency in the hope that people will somehow think you're decent. It's about saying whatever you think you need to say in order to get elected. What it really is is a complete abandonment, a complete jettisoning of any principle, any conviction, any integrity that might have existed in Ernie Eves at one time when he served as finance minister in the province of Ontario. He has abandoned that because he's come to understand in a painfully clear way that Ontarians are not with him; they're with us. They want us to put health care, education and the protection of our environment first.

It comes down to trust, and Mr Eves has clearly shown that he is not to be trusted. Even his friends on Bay Street feel that way today. For six consecutive budgets our Premier, who was then Finance Minister, made it perfectly clear that cutting taxes was the one issue on which he would never, ever budge. His government even passed a law, the Taxpayer Protection Act, which we supported. But now that he's feeling a little heat, he's prepared to break that law—his own law. A "technical amendment," they're calling it, which will allow them to break their own taxpayer protection law.

You've got to admire the excuse being offered for this, though. The Premier offers that September 11 is to blame for delaying the tax cuts. But if memory serves us all well, and I'm sure that it serves us all well here, this government was using September 11 as an excuse to accelerate corporate tax cuts just a few short months ago. I think that's what they call "trying to have it both ways."

For seven years, in six consecutive budgets, Mr Eves preached the virtues of tax cuts and the Taxpayer Protection Act. Mr Eves told us that tax cuts were always good, even when they compromised health care, education and the protection of our environment. He told us that tax cuts, once promised, were a sacred trust; they had to be delivered and they could never, ever be delayed. Mr Eves staked his fiscal reputation on the Taxpayer Protection

Act. If there was one law passed by this government that Mr Eves and the Tories would never tamper with, let alone break, it was the Taxpayer Protection Act.

These matters—tax cuts and the Taxpayer Protection Act—were, it was clearly understood by all, matters of fundamental principle, matters of firm conviction and matters that went to the very core of what Ernie Eves stood for. After all, the tax cuts were in his budgets, and he himself introduced the Taxpayer Protection Act. But as they say, that was then and this is now. It turns out that Mr Eves's principles and his convictions, the very core of his political soul, have all too easily given way to political convenience.

I have rarely paid a tribute to Mr Eves's predecessor. I have on numerous occasions, and the Hansard is chock full of this, criticized Mr Harris for the direction he was taking the province in. But one thing I will say for Mr Eves's predecessor: at least we knew what he stood for and where he was coming from. He spoke from conviction and out of a sense of principle. We didn't agree with his direction, but at least he had one. This Premier and this government and this cabinet and these members are prepared to say absolutely anything in order to hang on to power.

The people of Ontario, I say again, will not be fooled. They will see through this pretence. They'll see past the truckloads of their own money being thrown at them during an election campaign, and they'll say, "You know what? It's time for a real alternative." Because while my friends opposite are suddenly preaching the virtues of public health care and education, we have been fighting for these things for years, and we've been fighting against the cuts brought in by this government in budgets delivered by the man who is now Premier.

We are called upon to believe that for some seven years, Mr Eves was a conscientious objector within his own government. He simply never had the opportunity as Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance to approach the media and tell them that secretly he has been a passionate champion of public education, medicare and a champion of safe and clean drinking water. Apparently he never had the opportunity during the course of the past seven years to speak out on those issues.

1530
I am very proud to say that we on this side of the House stand on principle. We stand on matters of fundamental conviction. We stand for something, and we have been unwavering in our commitments to health care, education and the environment. Let's take a moment—I'm sure my friends opposite would be interested in learning more about this—to take a look at the differences.

In health care, my friends clearly are very proud of the money they're spending, particularly for hospitals. There's no question that hospitals need the money, there's no question that hospitals are reeling from this government's mismanagement and there's no question that they're going to be happy to get at least some additional funds. But let's keep this in perspective. This

government is only spending money to repair the damage it has done after seven long years of Ernie Eves's cuts. This budget has now just brought hospital funding levels back up to what they were in 1995. That may be good news in the back-to-the-future world Mr Eves lives in, but in the real world it's just back to square one, except with fewer doctors, fewer nurses and fewer hospital beds.

What's more, this budget lacks any vision for improving and reinvigorating health care for the next century. Ontarians are now on to political leadership when it comes to the matter of health care. They understand that the solution will lie not only in introducing more money into the system but in changing the very system itself. All this government has done, because it lacks any vision with respect to health care, as it does with respect to anything else, is throw some money at health care. Where are the plans for wellness promotion? Where are the ideas for illness prevention? Where is primary care reform? After this government's relentless pursuit of primary care reform in Ontario, we now understand that only 2% of family doctors have actually signed on to this government's plan.

We learned today—in fact, I just received this information when I was scurried a few moments ago outside these doors—that this government has now abandoned its plans to achieve an 80% signup rate by 2003. They've abandoned that. They've given up any pretense of trying to achieve that. There is no new and expanded role for nurse practitioners and there is no expansion of community-based health care. In short, there is no vision. It's just some money the Tories probably will grab back a year after the next election, given half the chance.

My party appreciates the importance of our hospitals, but we also understand that there's more to health care than hospitals alone. In fact, the best way we can ease the crisis in our hospitals is to improve primary care. I can tell you that we on this side are committed to delivering primary care reform, not just making speeches about it. We're going to set up family health centres in communities across this province. The ministers opposite have expressed some passing interest in another one of our plans, and I beg to inform them that some several months ago now we put out our plan for family health centres. I beg their indulgence and I will tell them a bit more about that right now, since they missed the original announcement. We're going to shore up our hospitals, but we will also improve primary care, taking pressure off emergency rooms and improving care for our families. We're going to do these things because, and this is very important, we really believe in public health care, as opposed to Ernie Eves, who believes in cutting that care to make room for corporate tax cuts.

In education, we have the usual mix in the budget of too little, too late, and misplaced priorities. One example: the government's student achievement fund has the laudable goal—I will give them that—of encouraging schools to improve student results. But it only promises to reward schools that are already doing well, while doing nothing to help schools that are struggling because

of this government's relentless attack on public education.

I want you to contrast that with our system of light-house schools, which gives money to successful schools so they can use that money precisely to share the secrets of their success with other schools. The idea is to make success contagious so every school and every child succeeds, so that we succeed as families, as communities and as a province.

I know where the Tories got their ideas. George Bush has been talking about that for quite some time. I think it's an important opportunity for Ontarians to gain a good understanding of the difference between their approach and our approach. They will reward successful schools. We will provide money to successful schools on condition that they use that money to share their best practices so we could lift up all schools inside the system.

Something else we will do: we are going to cap class sizes in the lower grades. This government has allowed classes to swell to a point where kids are falling through the cracks. My government would put a stop to school closures while the funding formula is under review. That's the same formula—

Interjection: Dream on.

Mr McGuinty: The member opposite says, "Dream on." Apparently, they have no interest whatsoever in keeping schools under threat open.

Perhaps members of the government ought to reconsider their position with respect to school closures. I've travelled to many communities in Ontario, but particularly in smaller settings in rural communities—communities are very concerned about the impact of the loss of a school. It may be that in my hometown of Ottawa or in our larger urban centres like Toronto, if we close down a school downtown, the next one might be a mile away. If you close down a school in a rural community, the next school might be a 45-minute to one-hour bus ride away. When you lose a neighbourhood school, particularly in a rural centre, you're losing the heart and soul of that community.

The members opposite may not feel it's important to try our very best to keep our rural schools open, but we happen to believe that is a very important priority for us. Maybe if this government really valued public education as the path to success, as we do, it would truly make it a priority, as we have. If they did, they would worry less about competing with Alabama for the lowest corporate tax rate in North America and worry a lot more about the kids who can't keep up with their badly thought-out curriculum.

We are going to streamline special education to clear up the backlog of kids needing critical assessment. For me—and I've said this countless times—this notion of 39,000 Ontario children on a waiting list, some waiting for up to one year to receive their first special education assessment, is not only a financial problem, it's a moral problem.

What the government doesn't get is that at the beginning of the 21st century, as we try to compete in a

highly competitive, knowledge-based global economy, it is absolutely essential that all of our children be able to achieve their greatest potential. So we can't say to 39,000 kids, "Too bad. We haven't got the necessary resources. Just wait in line." That is reprehensible. This government fails to understand that.

Interjection.

Mr McGuinty: They continue to say opposite, "Well, where is your shadow budget?" I'll tell you one thing, and I've told this to the members opposite several times over: cancel your corporate tax cuts; there's \$2.2 billion. Cancel the private school tax credit; there's another half-billion dollars for you. It's not that this government lacks the means to support public education, medicare and the protection of our environment; they simply lack the will.

On the education file, we've also put forward a very good anti-bullying proposal which we are encouraging the government to adopt. We must do for bullying in this province what we have done together for drinking and driving. We have made it socially unacceptable.

We're also going to expand programs like co-op education, in which kids get practical work experience as part of their high school program.

1540

Last but not least, as I just mentioned, we would scrap the private school tax credit. We're not going to postpone it; we're not going to dance around trying to make as many people as possible happy. We're going to scrap it, because we've got better uses for that money inside our public schools.

As with public health care, we view public education as something to be invested in. My friends opposite have never, ever understood this. They begrudge every dollar they have to spend on health care or education. What they don't seem to get is that both these vital public institutions are critical to a healthy economy.

Public health care gives our businesses an enormous competitive advantage. Public education produces a skilled workforce, which is absolutely imperative in today's competitive, knowledge-based global economy. I'm talking here about a win-win. You invest in health care and education because it's the right thing to do and because it stimulates the economy. This way, our families can succeed, our people can get the best jobs, our province can attract investment and our economy can and will prosper.

If Mr Eves had understood that during six consecutive budgets as finance minister, he wouldn't have to resort to buying his way out of a deficit by selling part of Hydro One.

We were relieved to hear that the government would be spending some money on the environment. After all, as finance minister—

Interjection.

Mr McGuinty: I didn't really want to do this, but since the minister has called upon me to revisit the extensive flip-flopping Mr Eves has gone through when it comes to the position on the sell-off of Hydro One, I will

have to do that. Let's go through that together, as a matter of important public education.

During the course of the leadership pursuit, Mr Eves, as he then was, told us he was for the sell-off of Hydro One. After he became Premier, he confirmed that he was for the sell-off of Hydro One. But when we had our by-elections and things were tight and Mr Eves was up against it, he told us through headlines that appeared in the daily papers on that day of the by-elections that he was against the sale of Hydro One. So it was on the table, then it was off the table.

Shortly after that he told us it was back on the table. Then last week there were headlines that said it was once again off the table. But now it's in the budget, which tells us it's kind of half on and half off the table.

We're talking here about the Olga Korbut and Nadia Comaneci of flip-flops when it comes to the Hydro One issue. But I appreciate being given the opportunity by the members opposite to revisit that painful legacy.

Back to the issue of the Minister of the Environment: as I said, we're pleased there is going to be further investment on that front. After all, as finance minister, Mr Eves hacked away at the Ministry of the Environment, cutting the budget in half and firing some 750 workers, including countless water inspectors and enforcement officers.

It's important to remember as well that Finance Minister Eves made those cuts in the face of clear warnings that to proceed would be to place the health of Ontarians at risk.

So now, two years after the Walkerton tragedy, two years after seven people lost their lives as a result of drinking deadly water, two years after 2,300 people were sickened by drinking water, Ernie Eves is telling us he wants to make things right.

It's too late. I don't believe him and you can't trust him. Just last week, two years after Walkerton—two years after seven died, two years after 2,300 got sick, two years after a number of children developed kidney problems that will last them for the rest of their lives—we learned that this government, seven years after farming out water testing, seven years after saying, "We are no longer going to test water through the province of Ontario; we're going to turn that over to the private sector," seven years after they got out of the water testing business, that they have not yet begun to police those people who test our water. So when Mr Eves tells us, "Hey, look, secretly I've always been a champion of safe and clean drinking water; just watch me move," I say his record more than speaks for itself. I don't believe him. I don't trust him. It's a sad thing to say, but I don't think Ontario families can trust Mr Eves to protect their drinking water.

In water safety, as in education and health care, this government's priority is to cut in order to make room for corporate tax breaks, and the pretense of change that they made in yesterday's budget isn't going to fool anyone. In this speech I've laid out the differences between us on this side of the House and the members opposite.

From day one we have been on the side of working families and the things they have to be able to count on: public education; health care; a clean environment, including safe drinking water. The members opposite are trying to hop on to our train at the last minute, but they bought themselves a return ticket, and after the next election they're going to be returning to their old ways.

We have spelled out a clear, innovative, strong plan for improving health care and education, including family health centres and smaller class sizes. This government has thrown money at the crises they themselves created in our schools, in our hospitals, but their plan is as clear as their direction, which is to say it is completely muddled.

We represent the radical centre, with a clear direction, innovative ideas and a strong plan for our families and for our futures. If they have shifted at all, albeit temporarily, it has been to the mushy middle. There is no direction, there are no ideas and there is no plan coming from the members opposite. They are trying to be all things to all people. Why, their own budget sings the praises of corporate tax cuts on one page and then puts them off for a year on the next page. Their own finance minister told a news conference that tax cuts create jobs, but there won't be tax cuts this year because, I don't know, maybe she's against jobs this week. It's rather confusing, isn't it?

I say to the members opposite, folks, you either believe in something or you don't. I will admit that my colleagues and I are a little flattered by some of this. While he hasn't done a very good job of it, Mr Eves clearly has decided that the only way he's going to get re-elected is by trying to create the impression that he's a Liberal. Well, to paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen: I know Liberals; I stand today with Liberals; I am a Liberal. And I say to Mr Eves, "You, sir, are no Liberal."

The people of Ontario will not be fooled. The working families of Ontario will not be fooled. They know who is on their side; they know who has been there all along. We have been unremitting and relentless in our defence of those things that Ontario's working families have to be able to count on, and I'm proud to say we did that when it was not popular to do so.

This government now would have us believe it can change its stripes in mid-stride. They would have us believe that suddenly they're going to become champions of health care, education and safe and clean drinking water. People are now asking themselves, "Which one is the real Ernie Eves? Is the guy here who authored six consecutive budgets by himself, nonetheless, Mr Eves? Is it the guy who put tax cuts before health care, education and the environment? Is that the real Mr Ernie Eves? Or is this other fellow, who's prepared to rip up the Taxpayer Protection Act, who's prepared to abrogate his promises to go ahead with tax cuts, the guy who claims that secretly he's been a champion of safe and clean drinking water, the real Mr Eves?"

1550

I have undying faith in Ontario voters. They will see this as easily as you and I see through clear glass. They know who's on their side. They know who's always been on their side. I say once again with tremendous pride that if Ontario families are looking for a party that will go to the wall and do so in times when it's popular and when it's unpopular and will defend health care, education and the environment, including their drinking water, they can always count on the Ontario Liberals.

I understand I've been called upon to revise the initial amendment I put forward, and I do so happily. I wish to move an amendment to the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on June 17, 2002, which I will read as follows:

"That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government" be amended by deleting the words after "That this House" and adding thereto the following: "recognize the fact that the budget contradicts everything this government has said for the past seven years, does nothing to keep schools open, lower and cap class sizes or support our children with special needs, cynically promises to both keep and sell Hydro One, desperately pledges to both implement and delay corporate tax cuts and miraculously supports and opposes private school tax credits simultaneously. Therefore, this House has lost confidence in this government."

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr McGuinty has moved an amendment to the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on June 17, 2002, which reads as follows:

"That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government" be amended by deleting the words after "That this House" and adding thereto the following: "recognize the fact that the budget contradicts everything this government has said for the past seven years, does nothing to keep schools open, lower and cap class sizes or support our children with special needs, cynically promises to both keep and sell Hydro One, desperately pledges to both implement and delay corporate tax cuts and miraculously supports and opposes private school tax credits simultaneously. Therefore, this House has lost confidence in this government."

Further debate?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

HERITAGE HUNTING AND FISHING ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA CHASSE ET LA PÊCHE PATRIMONIALES

Mr Baird, on behalf of Mr Ouellette, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to recognize Ontario's recreational hunting and fishing heritage and to establish the Fish and Wildlife Heritage Commission / Loi visant à reconnaître le patrimoine de la chasse et de la pêche sportives en Ontario et à créer la Commission du patrimoine chasse et pêche.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

BUILDING CODE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CODE DU BÂTIMENT

Mr Baird, on behalf of Mr Hodgson, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement / Loi de 2001 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le code du bâtiment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

I have received a communication from the chief government whip stating that this vote will be deferred until June 19.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1556.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)
21A	1004	2	45

Should read:

over there. I presume we're not going to use you as the consultant.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas-	McMeekin, Ted (L)		Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance
Flamborough-Aldershot			Barrett, Toby (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)		Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)		Agostino, Dominic (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC)		Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée		Christopherson, David (ND)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Halton	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	
Burlington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC)
	Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Huron-Bruce	Gerretsen, John (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)		
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 18 June 2002

Mardi 18 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 18 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 juin 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HYDRO ONE INC. DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LES ADMINISTRATEURS ET LES DIRIGEANTS DE HYDRO ONE INC.

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 17, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One Inc. and its subsidiaries / Projet de loi 80, Loi concernant les administrateurs et les dirigeants de Hydro One Inc. et de ses filiales.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was going to suggest, and I look to all members of the House, that since Mr Wetlaufer has concluded his remarks, we would move into the next speech, if that had the consent of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): According to our rules, that is what is going to happen anyway.

Further debate? The member for St Paul's.

Applause.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): Applause? Well.

Hon Mr Baird: I'm here for you, Michael.

Mr Bryant: Thank you. This is a bill that demands debate about who knew what and when, when it comes to the future of Hydro One.

Interjections.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): You already got them upset. It's been a while.

Mr Bryant: That is a while. The government is concerned because, whether they know it or not, what we've seen in the past few weeks has been the Common Sense Revolution succeeded by a very different kind of revolution—a revolution which has abandoned every tenet of parliamentary tradition and convention known to this institution, whereby this government, and in particular the executive council, the cabinet, no longer feels it is responsible in any way, shape or form. I'm talking about the principle of ministerial responsibility, the principle that ministers must account for and explain what happens in their ministry—not just to their person, but to their ministry; not just during their tenure, but at the very least

to deal with what happened during the tenure of the government. You can be sure they'll deal with previous governments and explain what happened there as well. But the bottom line is that a minister has to stand up in this Legislature and say, "Here is why we did what we did. Here is what happened in our ministry," and if there is a problem, "Here is what we're going to do to fix it." The story of this bill is the story of a government that to date has refused to be held to account and to come clean with the people about what happened over at Hydro One.

I would remind everybody in this House and everybody watching that this story unfolded in this House, in this Legislature, in many ways. Although Hydro One had been incorporated as a government corporation for years, and while the government had been responsible for years for the actions of Hydro One, it was only in the last few weeks, I guess a couple of months now, that the story of what was going on at Hydro One came to light. But for the questions in this Legislature by Dalton McGuinty and Ontario Liberals, we may never have gotten to the bottom of how much the directors were getting paid, what the golden parachutes were or about the yacht.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Dream on. Dream on.

Mr Bryant: On the other hand, the government members say, "Dream on. We eventually would have found out." Then the minister will stand up and say, "Here are the checks and balances that we have in place to ensure that this in fact will always come to light." What's different about this case is that this is a company, Hydro One, like all the hydro successor companies, that is not subject to freedom-of-information-act requests, which means it is insulated from public scrutiny. That means, by law, it is only through this Legislature that we can get answers as to what is going on in Hydro One.

1850

That isn't that complicated, you might think. Why? Because there is one shareholder in Hydro One, the government, and in particular it's the minister. The Minister of Energy is really the representative of the shareholder, the people of Ontario. We, the people, own Hydro One. We're the sole shareholder and our representative is Minister Stockwell. He is responsible not only for that which happens to his direct knowledge, but he is responsible for everything that happens in Hydro One, ultimately. He is responsible for all that happens in his ministry, ultimately.

I'll also talk about, in a moment, the principle of ministerial responsibility. It does not mean that every

error made within the ministry itself necessarily results in the firing or resignation of a minister. That's not the suggestion.

Interjection.

Mr Bryant: No, that's not the suggestion. I never said that. Nobody has said that. We've asked for the government to explain what happened, to hold itself to account, to say when it knew about the compensation, when ministry officials found out about the golden parachutes, about the golden spinnaker, Hydro One's Defiant, and when Minister Stockwell's predecessor knew. He of course is responsible for what happens not only on his watch but certainly under the watch of this government.

Nobody would suggest for a moment that a minister up in Ottawa right now, a federal minister responsible for HRDC, isn't somehow accountable for that which happened in previous ministries. Of course not; that would be an outrage. But here in this House, in Queen's Park, the government of Ontario has decided that it will see no evil, speak no evil and hear no evil when it comes to the actions of Hydro One and the Ministry of Energy. Minister Stockwell will not come clean and tell us when his ministry was aware. We know that Minister Wilson had problems with Hydro One. We know that because he was quoted in published reports. He said, "Yes, that board, we should fire the whole lot of them." He was the Minister of Energy. He had an opportunity to fire the whole lot of them when he was the Minister of Energy, and he didn't. The question is, why didn't he fire the whole lot of them if that's what he thought should have happened then?

How long did Minister Wilson know about the outrageous compensation packages? Did Minister Wilson know about the million-dollar sponsorship budget of Hydro One? Did Minister Stockwell know about the million-dollar sponsorship budget of Hydro One? Did the Deputy Minister know about it? Who knew what, and when? The minister will stand up, if he is fulfilling the principle of ministerial responsibility, and he'll say so. The people will decide whether or not this was an anomalous oversight, an omission of somebody in the Ministry of Energy, or whether it's something that somebody must provide some remedy for.

We've had other ministers in this government who have said that errors were made in their ministry and they, as the ministers, must step down. Minister Wilson—remember?—when he was the health minister, said, as a result of something that one of his staffers said to the media—an inappropriate disclosure with respect to a physician—he would step down during that investigation. Did Minister Wilson? Did he pick up the phone and call the journalist and mention the doctor's name? No, he didn't do it, but someone in his ministry did do that, and so he took responsibility and resigned.

Minister Runciman, same thing; Minister Sampson, same thing in the past. Why? In some cases a ministry official, in one case a parliamentary assistant, engaged in behaviour that resulted in investigations to look into whether or not the Young Offenders Act had been

breached. They took responsibility for people in their office and their ministry, because that's how it works.

But that's not what is happening with Hydro One, and this bill is a scapegoat—of course it is. This bill is about creating scapegoats, and because we started this in this Legislature, we're going to have to finish this in the Legislature. That's why we must support this bill.

But let's be clear: this is a mess that the government has created.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): No.

Mr Bryant: The government thinks there's no mess. If there's no mess, why have we got a bill?

Mr Murdoch: We didn't say there wasn't a mess; we just don't know who created it.

Mr Bryant: The member says, "We didn't say it isn't a mess." The member says, "We just don't know who created it." You're the government, remember? You're the guys who are supposed to come and fix the government, and instead the government has fixed you.

What's happened? Here's a group who came in there to be the plumbers. They moved into the mansion. They took a look around. They said, "It's great here. Maybe we don't want to fix these pipes. Maybe we don't want to be the folks to fix the government; maybe we want to be the folks who move in." This is a government that is drunken from the elixir of power, this party, and they want to stick around even longer. So we've got this whack-a-mole Premier who, if you ask him a question, will stand up and say whatever it takes to get himself out of trouble. Thus, this bill.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think that a member of this Legislature deserves respect in the terminology that all members are due in here, and I think the member from St Paul's should apologize. He's not a wacko Premier.

Mr Bryant: I said "whack-a-mole."

Mr Johnson: He's not that either; he's an honourable member—

The Acting Speaker: Will the member for Perth Middlesex—

Mr Johnson: I'm rising on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker: And I'm sitting you down. don't think there was anything out of order.

Mr Bryant: I say to the member opposite—whack-a-mole. It's not Latin; it's about somebody who refuses to give a straight answer. It's about somebody who'll do anything, say anything to get re-elected. That's what this Premier is all about.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Perth Middlesex will come to order.

Mr Bryant: This government is responsible for providing direction to Hydro One. This government is responsible for determining the parameters within and around which compensation for the Hydro One board and Hydro One executive officers takes place. And this government was either asleep at the switch—

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): Sit down and vote for the bill.

Mr Bryant: Here's the former Minister of Energy saying, "Sit down and vote for the bill." Shame on you. This is a House of debate. This is a Legislature where the opposition has an opportunity to hold this government to account. Because Lord knows, when you were the Minister of Energy, you didn't hold the Hydro One board to account. You were either asleep at the switch or you were conducting this gravy train, and shame on you.

Hon Mr Wilson: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The honourable member doesn't know what he's talking about and he's imputing motive, and I think you should make some ruling on this.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: One moment; we're going to have to have a little bit of decorum in here. It maybe was a little bit too long at supper, I'm not sure, but something has happened. The member for St Paul's has the floor, and only the member for St Paul's.

Mr Bryant: I say again, this government represents the shareholder. They had the opportunity to ensure that we would not end up in the mess that we are in now. Yes, we've got a bill here which is going to hopefully correct it. But let's be clear: this is a mess of the government's creation, and the government won't take responsibility for it. I know it upsets the government. They're getting very upset. They're jumping up and down on points of order to try and distract the people from what's going on here. But this is a mess. This is a huge mess.

1900

Here's a government engaging in a bill that you might have expected, frankly, from some kind of a banana republic in the cancellation of a contract, I guess citing the doctrine of executive necessity or something, and inevitably affecting all contracts of the crown hereafter. I mean, do you think that an executive officer is going to join in a government enterprise corporation hereafter without expecting some kind of insurance, if you like, compensation, some kind of a premium for entering into a contract as an executive officer with a government enterprise corporation? Why? Because they might end up negotiating a contract and having the contract destroyed, nullified, removed, with no legal recourse whatsoever. That's what this bill does.

We have to do this, because that's the situation we're in right now, but if the government had been doing its job all along we would not be in this mess. It's very difficult to come up with examples by which a government would enter into a contract, would be the representative shareholder in a company, would be the contractor in the contract and would turn around after the contract was completed and pass a law to ensure that in fact the contract would not be observed. It is an admission of failure by the government. It's an admission of failure.

I certainly hope that the taxpayer doesn't end up with a massive litigation bill as a result of the fights that might ensue as a result of those who want to enforce their contracts that have been retroactively terminated or changed. I hope that doesn't happen. But if the Pearson airport

precedent is any example, it's going to cost the taxpayers a lot of money to get out of this.

My great concern is that it's a pattern. The government refuses to provide an explanation as to what happened in the Ministry of Energy, who knew what and when, with respect to compensation of Hydro One board members and executive officers.

Similarly, we asked the Minister of Energy, the same person, to answer for what happened last week with respect to the water testing debacle. Water testing is in disarray in this province. What did the minister do? He didn't stand up and say, "I'm going to take responsibility for this. Here's what went wrong and I'm going to fix it." He said, "We're going to have an investigation. Some bureaucrat didn't pick up the phone."

The principle of ministerial responsibility is there not only for the purposes of democracy; it's there in order to ensure the anonymity of civil servants. Civil servants need to know on an ongoing basis that they can give frank advice to a minister, a succession of ministers, depending on the party—it doesn't matter—without being dragged on the carpet and being held publicly to account. Civil servants aren't supposed to be publicly held to account in the way that cabinet ministers are. Why? The minister represents the ministry. The minister has to take responsibility for its shortcomings. When it comes to what happened with the Hydro One board, this government didn't do that. The Premier didn't do it; the minister didn't do it. On the environment, they want to engage in another witch hunt looking for more scapegoats instead of taking responsibility, like ministers are supposed to do.

Dalton McGuinty asked a question with respect to when the Premier knew about the compensation packages, and the Premier said, "Well, at the time in question which that payment package came down, I wasn't an MPP at the time." Remember that? This is Mike Harris's right-hand man. This was the finance minister; this was the deputy leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. This was a man who was an MPP in the House for more than 20 years and he was the Premier-designate, and he was saying, "You can't hold me to account. I was in a boardroom at the time."

The purpose of having the executive accountable to the Legislature, and ministers standing up in question period and facing the music, is letting democracy work in this House. It's about letting the government of the day stand up and explain to the Legislature and to the people of Ontario what happened. That's our question: what happened over at Hydro One? What happened? How could this have happened? How could we get to the point where we have to bring in a bill that retroactively cancels a contract? By the way, the bill can disappear. There's a provision in the bill that permits it to repeal by regulation. Poof, it can just disappear.

This is a desperate act of a desperate government. Yes, we have to undertake this drastic measure because the government has got us into this enormous mess. But ultimately the principle of parliamentary responsibility,

of ministerial responsibility, requires that the captain go down with the ship, which means that the Minister of Energy has to explain who in his ministry knew about this; why they didn't fix it. When did Minister Wilson know? Why didn't he fix it? How did we get to the point where in fact we have to bring in a piece of legislation like this, which normally would only be brought in under some doctrine of executive necessity, some extraordinary circumstance—not governmental incompetence, but some extraordinary circumstance? The extraordinary circumstance here is just massive incompetence and a massive refusal to be held to account, a refusal to stand up and say, "We made a mistake. We should have, as the shareholder, as the government, fixed this, got this right." To be held to account is the purpose of democracy, and yet we get this.

I said it before and I'll say it again: the Minister of Energy is engaging in these energy emperor-terminator actions. Before it goes any further, he ought to do two things: (1) explain to this House exactly when his ministry knew about the circumstances leading to this, and (2) let everybody in Ontario understand the compensation packages of the other Hydro successor companies. Ontario Power Generation has a president who has earned as much money as the president of Hydro One, yet there is no accountability there. The charade has got to end. With this bill, we'll help the government get out of trouble, but ultimately the captain has got to go down with the ship, and this government has got to be held to account.

The Acting Speaker: Questions, comments?

Mr Christopherson: Let me say at the outset that I always enjoy listening to the member from St Paul's. He very much reminds me of the dean of this place, Mr Sean Conway, in terms of his ability to articulate a message and convey it. Regardless of whether you agree with the message or not, I think his abilities stand on their own.

In this case, I happen to agree with what he said. Basically, the honourable member from St Paul's was saying, in the image of the 30th anniversary yesterday of Watergate, "What did the minister know and when did he know it?"

The argument actually is pretty airtight. Either the minister knew, because it's his responsibility to know and therefore he needs to be held accountable for doing nothing about the exorbitant pay until it became front-page news, or he didn't know what was going on, which is equally difficult because it's his job to know what's going on in his ministry. One would think, when we've got a public corporation—because as we speak tonight, that's what it still is. We've got senior executives in a public corporation making themselves instant millionaires. Family fortunes are being founded at Hydro One on the back of every Ontarian who pays a hydro bill. The honourable member from St Paul's rises in his place this evening and says, "Did the minister know? If he did, why didn't he do something? And if the minister didn't know what was going on, why didn't he know?" That's a valid point and it speaks to the very root of the bill in front of

us tonight. I want to compliment him on the remarks he made this evening.

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Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): In the area of the province I come from, which is Nipissing—I know that the honourable member from St Paul's is very rude. He's pointing. I don't know if your parents ever told you that you shouldn't point. It's rude. He uses innuendoes and half-truths and insults the Premier and different ministers. It's just incredible. I stand here as an individual of this Legislature and understand that there are different points of view from both sides of the floor and I've yet to stand up and insult a member of this Legislature. For the honourable member from St Paul's to stand here and just yap about basically nothing—and that's all we've heard from him for the last month. It just continues on and on.

What I'd like to say to the honourable member from St Paul's is that the people of Ontario might have a little more respect and understanding of you if you just took a role that says, "Do you know what? This is what I believe." But to stand here and point and do all your waves—it's just incredible that you don't show respect for all members of the House, including the Premier and all the ministers. You keep saying all these innuendoes and half-truths. You've been saying that for a month now. I don't know who writes your speeches, but you might want to update them every once in a while. Frankly, I've only been here a month and I'm getting tired of them.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): First of all I would like to commend my colleague the member from St Paul's for the excellent points he made this evening. He does a fabulous job every time, certainly. The focus of his remarks of course was on the minister and what the minister knew and didn't know—absolutely based on fact—and what he didn't do and what he doesn't recognize is his responsibility.

Perhaps, before I say any more about my colleague the member from St Paul's and his very salient points, I'll say to the member from Nipissing that I suggest to you that you don't need to give us a sermon about being civil in this House and about calling other members of the House inappropriate names. I've sat in this chamber and listened to the Minister of Environment and Energy and there isn't anyone who pushes that envelope, in terms of disrespect, more than your Minister of Environment and Energy. So for you to stand here and suggest that the member from St Paul's was in any way inappropriate in the comments he made is in my opinion totally out of line. The member from St Paul's happens to be talking about the facts of this issue, the facts that have brought this bill to the House.

My leader, Dalton McGuinty, the member for Ottawa South; the member from St Paul's; the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke: were it not for the hard work they have done, we wouldn't even be entertaining this bill here tonight. They have exposed what you failed to recognize. Your government created Hydro One. Now

here we are tonight, dealing with the mess you didn't deal with when you should have. You appointed the board. You did not expect accountability from that board. Only when the members on this side of the House exposed that they were totally out of control there did you recognize that maybe something should be done about it. This bill is here because you people got caught.

I commend my colleague. I'm very proud to sit on this side of the House with someone who defends—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Johnson: I just wanted to make some brief comments about the former speaker. I did wonder a little bit about a couple of things. One was about the law training he has had that would allow him to make the assumption that the captain should go down with the ship, when he says, "We need evidence." I always thought that the evidence would come first and then a person would make the decision on what they were to do with it.

Maybe it's my night to disagree, but I thought comparing the speaker to Sean Conway was a little bit like comparing sheep droppings to cherry stones. I just wanted to say that I disagreed with just about everything the member said. I did want to put those things—

Interjections.

Mr Johnson: If I've said something that's not right, I would withdraw it. I just wanted to say that I disagreed with nearly everything the speaker said.

The Acting Speaker: The member for St Paul's has two minutes to respond.

Mr Bryant: I thank all the members for their comments. I would say to the member for Nipissing, in all seriousness, when it comes to decorum around here, I'm afraid that what comes around goes around. When the former Minister of Energy says to me to sit down and vote for the bill, you're going to get the kind of response that was sent his way. This is the minister who was in charge of a ministry that permitted the Hydro One board to engage in a power play that put us in this untenable position today. For that minister to suggest that we should just trust him, not read the bill, not debate the bill, not send the bill to committee but just trust him, of all people, and not continue to debate this matter and not try to hold this government to account, would in my view be a dereliction of my duty as a member of the opposition and of this Legislature. I can tell you that when it comes to decorum, your predecessor, sir, for your seat, was hardly the model of an Ontario parliamentarian. So live by the sword, I guess, and die by the sword, in that sense.

The point here is, the government can try and distract the people of Ontario all they want with respect to what happened, but we on this side of the House are going to continue to ask those questions. We are going to continue to try to hold this government to account. We are going to try to continue to ensure that the captain does go down with the ship. If the members opposite want to get to the bottom of this matter and find out all the evidence, then the government had better start standing up and answering for its ministries, not hiding behind the fact that the

minister has been in office in his particular ministry for a few weeks. We will continue—

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member for Hamilton West.

Applause.

Mr Christopherson: I thank my friend from St Catharines, and others. I appreciate that. We'll see how you feel at the end of it. These things can change on a dime.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): Take it easy.

Mr Christopherson: Not "Take it easy on the government," I'm sure.

Interjection: No.

Mr Christopherson: OK. Fair enough.

Let me begin, if I can, as I've done before whenever we've talked about the Hydro issue, and although it's not directly related to this, it is nonetheless Hydro and therefore germane to the point, and that is that, in large part, the Hydro issue that's now before us wouldn't even be here were it not for the labour movement in Ontario and in particular the CEP and CUPE unions that quite frankly saw a broader vision of their responsibilities than just being at the bargaining table filing grievances and taking care of health and safety matters and other important issues. They saw beyond that and saw that to properly and adequately and fully represent their members, they need to be engaged in all aspects of matters that affect their members' lives. Certainly the provision of hydro is very much directly related to jobs, to creation and maintenance of same, as well as just people's ability to pay for the hydro and the air conditioning and the heating that have become a way of life for all of us, particularly in this part of the world.

So again, thanks. The government's sure not going to do it, so I'm going to make sure that the labour movement is recognized and given the thanks they deserve for taking on this issue and giving us in large part the democratic debate that my friend from St Paul's was referring to earlier.

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Now, the bill itself: first of all, it continues to be a valid question to pinpoint exactly what the minister knew and when he knew it, because I have trouble believing the full story is out there at this point. I have trouble understanding how it is that we can have people being paid at a level that causes this government to introduce legislation to reverse it, yet prior to it being on the front page of the papers, the minister knew nothing about it. How can that be? Somebody is asleep at the switch when you go from something being a non-issue to an introduction of legislation in the span of a few weeks. That's quite a gap, and yet there you are and the minister remains. So I don't think all the details are out there as to how we could be where we're at.

But let's deal with the fact that we now have Bill 80 in front of us here in the House. It's supposed to solve the problem, and I suppose from a Tory perspective maybe it does. But I've got to tell you that from the perspective of

the average person in Ontario, it falls very short of solving the problem.

The problem is that we've got senior executives at Hydro One who did, it would seem, exactly what the government asked them to do. The government said, "We want you to be more like the private sector. We want you to conduct yourself the way senior executives in the private sector conduct themselves." So, being intelligent people, they said, "If that's what you want us to do, then the first thing we'll do is what senior executives do in the private sector," and that is to take care of themselves. They went out and looked around and saw how much money, how many millions of dollars, individuals are making in the private sector and they said, "We'd better do what the minister asked us to do. We'd better do what the government asked us to do. We'd better raise our wages." So, boy, did they ever.

I say to members in this House, I don't think the government quite gets the way the average person sees this issue in Ontario. They find it hard to believe that somebody leaves a job and they get six million bucks. They have difficulty understanding how it is that somehow these individuals are personally guilty when all they've been doing is following what the government told them to do, which was to act more like the private sector. The government wanted private sector discipline brought to Hydro One, and that's exactly what they did.

Suddenly it becomes front-page news. We don't know whether the minister knew or not, or when he knew, or when he found out, but anyway we've got these multiple millions of dollars being paid to people who were doing what they thought was the government's bidding. It becomes front-page news. There's a major kerfuffle across the province. The government realizes they've got a problem. So they say, "This is awful. We're going to do something. We're going to bring in a law; we're going to pass a law." You know the old saying, "There ought to be a law"? That's what this government said, "There ought to be a law," so they introduced one.

The problem is that it doesn't solve the problem, because all it says in subsection 8(1), under "Designated officers"—and this is the core of the issue—is, "The board of directors of Hydro One Inc. shall negotiate with each of the designated officers for a new employment contract that, in the opinion of the board, provides for a substantial reduction in the officer's remuneration and benefits." Obviously, it's very subjective as to what is "a substantial reduction," and when we look at who's going to decide it, the law says it'll be the board, and the board is appointed by the government.

I think most reasonable members of the government can understand why some of us on this side of the House and people out in the public are sort of standing back and saying, "Wait a minute. The Tory-appointed board approved the previous wages"—or, to be accurate, I guess, the current wages, because I'm not aware they've gone down yet. That board that was appointed by this government was fired by this government, or they resigned the day the bill was introduced. It amounts to the same thing.

Then the government brings in a bill that says there's going to be substantial reductions and the people who will decide what are substantial reductions are the members of the board that the government's going to appoint. Surely the government members can understand why some people remain a little skeptical about the intent here.

It's not as if these wages don't have a context. The CEO of Hydro-Québec makes \$407,000 a year. I've got to tell you, ordinarily that would make my eyes bulge a bit. I mean, 407 grand a year is a lot of money. But compared to \$2.2 million, that sure would constitute a substantial reduction in most people's minds. Any other examples in Canada? Yes, BC Hydro. The CEO there makes \$446,000 a year. Again, a lot of money, but compared to \$2.2 million, that is quite a substantial reduction. That's why our leader, Howard Hampton, introduced a private member's bill that would, if it were passed, limit the salaries to no more than 10% above those in comparable positions—ie, the two I've just raised here this evening. That is a bill that we could support.

Our difficulty with this bill is not that it attempts to resolve the problem; it's that it doesn't deal with it. There are no limitations. All it says is there'll be new negotiations and there'll be a substantial reduction and that the opinion of whether or not substantial reductions have been achieved will be decided by a board that this government appoints. That's how we got into the problem in the first place.

You see, this government doesn't believe in interfering. They like to give the impression that when there's an emergency they're prepared to step in. There will be critics who will say they shouldn't do this, and there have been. But at the end of the day they like to stay as far away from these things as possible because they have an ideology that says that those things are to be decided by others. We in the NDP believe that the primary concern should be the public interest.

Can you find the best possible person for half a million dollars a year? I don't know. But Quebec and British Columbia don't seem to have had any problem, and let me just spend a second talking about Quebec Hydro. It just happens that last week I was at a conference on the Great Lakes and seaway cities. I was there as a Hamilton MPP because the Hamilton Harbour, a large part of the waterfront of that harbour, is in my riding. One of the things we did was tour one of the generating plants—the conference was in Quebec—and the speaker happened to be the CEO of Quebec Hydro.

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Two important things about that are directly related to our debate here tonight around Bill 80. The first thing is that this CEO said in his speech—and it was a public speech—that he did not support nor see any reason to privatize any part of Quebec Hydro. Interesting, particularly when you consider the second part of this, and that is that Quebec Hydro made a billion-dollar profit and that billion dollars went to the Quebec citizens and the Quebec taxpayer. I don't care whether you want to call it

a left-wing idea, a right-wing idea, a centrist idea—call it whatever you want—I think it's a good idea. It's a good idea that hydro power is guaranteed in the province of Quebec in terms of its availability, its affordability, and at the end of the day it makes a billion-dollar profit that goes back into the coffers of the Quebec government.

There's only one reason you would step into a situation like that and say, "We're going to sell it," and that is that you want to provide somebody or some entity with some of that \$1-billion profit that now goes into the public good and have it diverted into somebody's private pocket somewhere, whether it's through shares, dividends, salaries or just generating profits. That's the only reason, because if your primary concern was the public good, then you'd be making the kind of speech that I heard the CEO of Quebec Hydro make and that was, he didn't see any reason why they'd want to privatize it.

Part of his speech was talking about the future and they were talking about the money that Quebec Hydro is investing and how they're making sure that not only do they have an adequate supply for Quebec citizens and Quebec business, but they do it in such a way—and I won't get into details; time doesn't permit—where they are actually able to sell some of their surplus. They generate it in the low times, sell it to the American market, to the American grid, at a huge profit, and then buy it back off that same grid when prices are way down. That seems to me to be using market forces, something this government says they support, but doing it for the public good.

They were talking about the future in terms of new technologies. You know what's really impressive about the Quebec Hydro system? There's so much emphasis on hydroelectric power as opposed to nuclear or coal or any alternative energies because it's an immediately renewable resource and there's no pollution to speak of, certainly not by comparison.

I don't think you have to have a degree in engineering to start to get excited about what you could do with your province and the provision of power, bearing in mind that there's a huge competitive advantage to the extent that Quebec Hydro, like Hydro One, is exempt from NAFTA. So Quebecers, like Ontarians, have the right to sell power domestically at one price and, if we've got a surplus, we can sell it, export it, at a higher price. That makes so much sense. It makes a lot of common sense. But no. We know the government is going to sell part of it. In fact, in the budget they tabled yesterday, in the background papers, if you take a look on page 57, it's all there under "Other Revenues: Sales and Rentals."

We go from the actuals in 2000-01 of \$637 million. The interim for 2001-02 is \$586 million, and the plan for 2002-03, the budget that was tabled yesterday, shows \$2.4 billion of income. The last time there was a jump in that column was just before the last provincial election. Do you know what happened there? You will recall that the government sold Highway 407, which was bad enough, but they took all the revenue from the sale of that public asset and used it as revenue for that one year. They didn't apply it to debt, they didn't apply it to

buying something else for the future or making any other investment; they sold it and used that money in their current-year budget so that it showed more money than they otherwise really would have had, and they used that money to put out an election platform that called for more—wait for it—tax cuts. This is the same thing. The numbers are almost the same. In the year I'm referring to it was \$2.1 billion; this is \$2.4 billion.

I don't know what happened in the last couple of weeks. I recall the Premier saying that the new board was going to meet and talk about the future of Hydro One and they'd be making recommendations to him, and all of a sudden this document gets tabled. We can prove the government is expecting the revenue from the sale of at least part of Hydro One, and now it seems to be a foregone conclusion that up to 49% of Hydro One is going to be sold. I don't recall that debate happening here and I sure don't recall that vote, so you still haven't learned your lesson.

I've got one minute. I do want to get at least one other thing on the record. It's something that's in this bill and it has been in a lot of other bills. I've got to tell you, I stand to be corrected, but I don't recall seeing these kinds of clauses as frequently: the last one under the explanatory note of the bill says, "No proceeding may be brought against the crown, Hydro One Inc., a subsidiary of Hydro One Inc. or any other person relating to anything done by the act." In other words, the government is going to do whatever they want and, "Oh, by the way, whether you like it or not and whether or not we've trampled on any of your rights, you can't do anything about this in terms of taking us to court."

There are lawyers in this place. Maybe they can comment. They're better equipped to than I. I don't recall, when we were in government, or other governments, for that matter, incorporating that clause almost as a matter of routine. It's something that needs to be looked at, I would suggest.

To wrap up in the final moments, yes, there's a huge problem. Yes, you should have known. Bill 80 doesn't solve it.

The Acting Speaker: Questions, comments?

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): It's a pleasure for me to rise and respond to the member for Hamilton West. The member said early on in his speech that this is about public perception. For the man at home the perception is, "How can someone get three or four times more for leaving a job than what he would get if he stayed?"

Indeed, that is the case here that we ran into and found out about after May 17, 2002, when the board of Hydro One directors decided to change the severance package for their CEO. We found out it was this gross amount of \$6 million if you leave your job. We responded to the Hydro One board and asked them to act appropriately. We weren't satisfied with their response. We came to this House and the minister introduced this bill.

The bill removes the directors of Hydro One. The bill allows the Minister of Environment and Energy to appoint their replacements. The bill imposes restrictions

on the payments that designated officers of Hydro One are eligible to receive. In other words, it adjusts those payments we just talked about. It requires Hydro One to negotiate new employment contracts and it protects the crown, the people of the province of Ontario, against suit for anything that occurs from this act.

In other words, it comes in and deals with the public perception, that people are right to say that \$6-million severance is ridiculous. They said, "Do something." The minister did. You guys have done nothing, on the other side of the House, except delay the government from dealing with what the public have asked us to deal with. We're trying to deal with it. I've listened to two 20-minute speeches tonight. I haven't heard one of you say what your position is on the bill. We're here to talk about the bill. Do they want to deal with this problem or do they not want to deal with this problem?

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Mr Ramsay: It's interesting that in this debate and of course in question period, when we raise questions about Hydro One and the government's plans to privatize that, the Minister of Energy and the Premier usually give as a response that we need to bring marketplace discipline to Hydro One. That's really interesting, because how do you bring marketplace discipline to a monopoly? You really have an organization here that is a natural monopoly, as our energy critic would say. There's only one transmission line system in this province and there isn't ever going to be any competition to that. We're not going to have a parallel set of lines down through the transmission corridors here.

If you're talking about running it more businesslike, you have had that opportunity through the appointment of your board of directors since 1999, when you had the break-up of Ontario Hydro into the five successor companies. After that time, you appointed business-oriented people to that board to run it like a business. Yet now you say that this organization is still a failure and that you have to privatize to bring competitiveness to it and business orientation to it.

I think if you took charge of this and kept it in the public domain and asked that board of directors—and you've got a fairly good board of directors now that you have appointed, a good cross-section of Ontarians of all political stripes. I think they could run it in a good businesslike manner and we could keep the entity in the public domain and have control of it, because it is the people of Ontario who own this entity. Taxpayers since 1908 have basically purchased all the assets of Hydro One. Ontarians are extremely proud of their transmission company, Hydro One. They want it to remain in the public domain. That's the message that Ontarians have been giving to this government and to the Liberal opposition and to our leader, Dalton McGuinty. That's what we're saying to you tonight: we need to keep Hydro One in the public domain. Ontarians love their transmission company.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): The comments made by my colleague the member for Hamilton

West, I couldn't agree with more. Quite frankly, for the government to come into the House and say, "Oh, we just found out about this in May, and my Lord, we've got to run to the House with legislation to fix—oops—something we found out in May," is preposterous. You're the guys who appointed the board. You're the ones who went out and appointed the board and said to the board that you want it to run with market discipline.

If I understand your argument correctly, you have one of two choices in your defence: either the board didn't tell you—at which point, I'm telling you, you guys have a problem; that means to say, you've got a minister who's not under control as far as being able to control the board—or you knew about it and did nothing. I've got to believe the Minister of Energy. The answer is (b), because he has said he's known about this for a long time. He has basically flipped his story, but if you listen to the latest story he says he knew. So the reality is, you guys are incompetent. There's no other explanation.

This board has been in place since 1999. They negotiated salaries and severance packages under the nose of the minister, and you guys did nothing about it. Then you come to the House and say that we, the opposition, are trying to hold it up. What poppycock. It makes no sense. You are the guys who have known about this and have done nothing. So now you're trying to do a little bit of damage control. Then you've got the nerve to come in here and say we're delaying the process? Where the heck have you guys been for the last number of years when you've known what's going on? You could have brought legislation into this House, you could have talked to the board directly, you could have exercised the powers of the Minister of Energy to deal with this issue, but you did nothing. So who has delayed the process? Not three days of debate at second reading; it's an incompetent government that chose to do nothing.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I noted with interest that the member talked a lot about the context of Hydro restructuring. I think that was quite reasonable because this bill has to be looked at in terms of the whole context of the problems it's addressing.

I don't think I have to remind the House of the problems that Ontario Hydro and its successor companies had. We had escalating prices, we had \$38 billion in debt, \$21 billion of which was stranded debt. Under the NDFI when they hired some new management, the management laid off about a third of the people working at Ontario Hydro and there was no reduction of service.

I think any reasonable person is prepared to agree that there was a serious problem at Ontario Hydro. I think the question arises, how is it that this problem happened and what are the solutions, because this bill certainly should be part of the solution.

My suggestion to this House and to the members opposite is that the problems arose because there was no accountability to the lenders because there was a government guarantee, there was no accountability to the owners because it wasn't the politicians' money, an-

there was no accountability to the consumers because there was no competition.

What the government has put before the people of Ontario and before this House is a solution which actually solves those problems. I hope that the member in his response is going to share with us his analysis of why there was such a mess at Ontario Hydro and how he thinks those problems are actually going to be solved. I would invite him not to look at "more of the same, only we'll do it better." We've seen that for many years and it has not worked at Ontario Hydro.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Christopherson: I thank my colleagues from London West, Timmins-James Bay, Timiskaming-Cochrane and Niagara Falls. To comment on the last speaker, just the fact that you're inviting a different opinion is a positive step forward. Up till now—and you've been very clever about it—what you've done on every single issue is, you've been very good at articulating and identifying problems, which in and of itself is no great feat. In any kind of organization as big as the government of Ontario there is always room for improvement. But in the past, you always identified the problem and then said, "That justifies what we're doing," and it doesn't. Just like in this case, yes, we can all argue what the problem is, but to say that because you've identified the problem, your solution is the one and only that works is not correct. This is not the case.

Interjection: What's yours?

Mr Christopherson: I'm going to come to that. Give me a moment. I've only got a minute left and I'll come to that second part.

Let me also go to the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane. He echoed my thoughts on the whole issue of what it means for the government to give out a direction to be more businesslike. I'm glad to see that he's onside with that. It wouldn't be right for me to be on my feet without acknowledging and mentioning that it was the leader of the official opposition, Dalton McGuinty, who also late last year thought selling Hydro One was a great idea and had to be brought around to the idea that it's a bad idea.

Lastly, to the member for Niagara Falls, it's interesting that in your comments you said it's a gross amount that they're receiving and that \$6 million is outrageous, and then you want to know what we've done. Quite frankly, Howard Hampton has done what this bill should have done. It should have said, "The wages are unacceptable and here are guidelines for what is."

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Maves: It's a pleasure for me to rise and again talk about Bill 80, the bill that we're talking about tonight, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One Inc and its subsidiaries. The member for Hamilton West at the end there did hit the nail right on the head. Quite frankly, we know every time on every issue where the NDP stand. They stake out a position on an issue and they pretty much always stand by it. There have been some times when they governed when they

didn't do that—for instance, the social contract, and there were others. But for the most part, the NDP stake out a position and stand by it. They don't apologize afterwards because, "Someone asked me too quickly for a response," which is something that Mr McGuinty did, which is a scary thought.

I do want to comment on the member for St Paul's. I didn't get a chance to talk after he spoke. He went on and on at great length about ministerial accountability and responsibility, and the minister should resign when something wrong happens in their ministry. Regardless of how it happened or whose fault it was, the interesting thing about that is that the Liberals profess to believe that, here in Ontario, for the Ontario government. If they applied that ministerial responsibility to their cousins in Ottawa, quite frankly, there wouldn't be a cabinet in the federal Liberal government. They've had so many screw-ups there, in fact scandals, that it surprises me that he doesn't stand up in this House and demand ministerial accountability out of federal Liberal cabinet ministers, especially when they have billion-dollar boondoggles.

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In this instance, the instance of Hydro One, we came across—as I said, on May 17 the Hydro One board changed its severance package for one of their executives to something that we found and, as the member for Hamilton West said—

Interjection.

Mr Maves: May 17, I would say again to the member from Timmins-James Bay, who hasn't got the dates right, who hasn't quite got that figured out, it was May 17. That's when we had this enhanced severance package. As the member for Hamilton West pointed out, the average person at home just says, "How can I get paid six million bucks if I walk away from my job—three or four times more than if I stay in my job?" When that came out, that's when the minister said, "Hold on a second here." He contacted the board, the board acted, wouldn't respond properly to the minister, and that's when we decided to act with Bill 80.

Let me tell everyone at home about Bill 80. Bill 80 is our answer to this public outcry over excessive executive compensation at Hydro One. This government viewed with great concern, as did many Ontarians, the extravagant compensation package of Hydro One executives, especially, as I said, an enhanced severance package which seemed to come out of thin air.

It was clear that the former board of Hydro One no longer shared our views on the best interests of the corporation or on its responsibilities to the people of Ontario. Dismissing a board that no longer reflects shareholders' interests is an appropriate business response. It's called good corporate governance, and Bill 80 deals exclusively with the problems of Hydro One and spells out the rules and procedures for making decisions that would put the people of Ontario first. The previous Hydro One board had strayed from the government's perception of how corporate governance should work. After all, good governance equals good business, and

that's what Bill 80 would ensure: that any board of directors for Hydro One act responsibly on behalf of the shareholder. Our proposed legislation puts the people of Ontario first. It very clearly states that the people of Ontario are the shareholders, through their government.

We have appointed an interim board because, as everyone knows, once things hit the fan, the members of the board of Hydro One resigned. We have appointed an interim board which will serve until the next annual general meeting of Hydro One. I'm pleased to say that all of our new board members come with solid reputations and are well qualified to do a good job. They understand that an open, responsible relationship with its shareholder is an important part of their role.

I want to talk a little bit about this new board. I want to start with the chair of the new board, Mr Glen Wright. I know Mr Glen Wright personally. He's a gentleman. He has a great background. He's currently the chair of the Cowan Insurance Group Ltd. He was appointed the chair of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board in 1996. He's a director of PrinterOn Corp, the Institute for Work and Health, a member of the Wilfrid Laurier University Foundation and a member of the board of governors of the Council for Canadian Unity.

I know him best as the chair of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, where he's been since 1996 and has done a spectacular job on behalf of the people of Ontario. The average workers' compensation rates in Ontario are down about 25% since Mr Wright took over in that position. They've done a survey recently of the injured workers. Something like 68% of injured workers are very satisfied with the WSIB in their experience.

Anyone will tell you that when you go back to 1995 and the years previous, everybody, whether you were an injured worker, an employer or a lawyer who dealt with the WSIB, it didn't matter who you were, thought it was a mess. It was an absolute mess. Rates were going through the roof and businesses just couldn't afford compensation rates.

I remember in 1993 in the region of Niagara we did a business survey and there were three principal concerns, two having to do with the high level of taxes, and the other one was with the workers' compensation system in this province. It was a major impediment; it was a major problem in keeping business and attracting business into this province. All that has been turned around, and at the head of that was Mr Glen Wright. As a pick for the chair of this interim board I can't imagine—when I heard that I was absolutely delighted—a better person. He is backed up by some very impressive people.

Geoffrey Beattie is currently president of the Woodbridge Co Ltd. He serves on the board of several companies, including the Thomson Corp, Bell Globemedia and the Royal Bank of Canada. He's a lawyer and he's got a lot of experience on boards of directors.

Heather Munroe-Blum has been a professor at the University of Toronto since 1994, where she's the vice-president of research and international relations. She has

been named the 16th principal and vice-chancellor of McGill.

So you've got a good person who has led a board in Mr Wright. You've got Geoffrey Beattie, who served on several boards and has a great business background, and then an academic in Heather Munroe-Blum.

Rita Burak: everyone in this House will know Rita. She was here as the chief civil servant of Ontario for many years. She has a great deal of experience and would be great on any board.

Dr Murray Frum served as chairman of Frum Development Group before being appointed chair of the Ontario Arts Council Foundation. He's chair of the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund and a governor of Mount Sinai Hospital. He was awarded, I might add, the Order of Canada in the year 2000.

Don MacKinnon has been the president of the Power Workers' Union since May 2000 and a lineman by trade since 1971. I haven't heard any of the members opposite compliment this Premier and the minister for appointing the head of the union at Hydro One to the board of directors. I think that was a great move and an appropriate move. Mr MacKinnon was vice-president of the union for 11 years prior to being elected president. He was appointed by the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology to the electricity transition committee and has been a member of the board of directors of the electrical safety association and the retail management board of Ontario Hydro.

I would just add to this, and I've said this before in the House, that I commend Mr MacKinnon for the direction he and the workers at Hydro One and his union brothers and sisters have taken, a very forward-looking direction where they've actually advertised for the privatization of Hydro One. They believe very deeply that Hydro One needs some outside capital brought in, in order to maintain and upgrade the transmission grid in this province. Mr MacKinnon really was a brave fellow. He stood to be put down by other union leaders like Mr Ryan and Mr Hargrove, people who don't want anything to do with this type of forward-looking, "Let's improve the company. What do we need to improve the company?" when the company improves the lives of our workers and our union brothers and sisters. So I commend Mr MacKinnon and I think he's a great addition to the board.

Ken Taylor is the chair of Global Public Affairs Inc. He is currently chancellor of Victoria University and serves as director on the boards of Skylink Aviation Inc, Devine Entertainment Corp and J&H Marsh and McLennan. He's the former Canadian ambassador to Iran and former Canadian Consul General in New York. He's the recipient of the United States Congressional Gold Medal and is an Officer of the Order of Canada. Everyone knows of Ken Taylor and his background as a diplomat who brought a great deal of pride to the country through his actions when he was ambassador to Iran.

Who else is on the board? Another blue-ribbon business person is Adam Zimmerman, with an accountin

background. Mr Zimmerman is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and has served on over 43 private sector boards during his career. Now retired, his corporate experience includes chair of the board of Noranda Forest, chairman and director of Confederation Life, director of Maple Leaf Foods, Southam Inc and the Toronto-Dominion Bank.

2000

That's a list of some of the very impressive people who have been appointed to be interim board of directors of Hydro One, and I have to commend the Premier and the minister for that.

These are the ones who are actually an extremely impressive group of people but, too often in the media, get passed over, simply because there are three high-profile political people on this board as well. Who are those three high profile political people? Well, one is Murray Elston, currently the president of Canada's research-based pharmaceutical companies. From 1981 to 1994 he served as Liberal MPP in the Ontario Legislature, where he held the positions of Minister of Health, Chairman of Management Board, Minister of Financial Institutions and chairman of the public accounts committee. Mr Gerretsen, whom I serve on the public accounts committee with, just left the room. He's the current chairman of that committee, and he does a very able job. But Mr Elston has quite a background in politics. He's well known. He was thought to be, at one point in time, a potential leader in the Ontario Liberal Party. In fact, I think they tried to get him to come back in the 1999 leadership, and he said, I think, "No way." But he has quite a distinguished career, and he will be a good member of that board.

Darcy McKeough is chairman of McKeough Investments Ltd and McKeough Supply Inc. He was Treasurer of Ontario and Minister of Economics and Inter-governmental Affairs in the cabinet of Premier William Davis. He serves as a board member for several organizations, and is an officer of the Order of Canada and, if I'm not mistaken, did work with Union Gas and so has quite a bit of history and knowledge of the energy sector.

Lastly, we have Bob Rae, the former Premier and leader of the NDP for many years—1982 to 1996, I believe. Premier Rae is an interesting sort, and the Liberals were quite upset when it was rumoured that Mr Rae would be asked to serve on the board, and actually maybe some members of his own party were upset; I don't know, but I recall members of the opposition.

Mr Rae had a bit of a turnaround of his philosophy of the world and the economics of Ontario when he served as Premier and found he couldn't spend his way out of debts and deficits. I know they did try to make some changes at Workers' Compensation before we came in and tried to actually lower rates, and they heard from the business community and tried to make some changes there. They tried to stop their relentless spending with the social contract.

In his private life so far, he actually represented the lumber companies of Canada. I saw him on CPAC one

night giving his speech in Washington and lecturing to the American audience about the benefits of free trade. So Mr Rae has moved a little bit from his socialist philosophies on economies. With his legal experience, political experience, experience dealing with people and his experience now as a lawyer and working on behalf of lumber companies in other parts of the world, he'll have something to add to that board of directors.

So that's the new board. It's an impressive one and, as I said, the three political people get all the attention, but there are a lot of very competent, highly skilled people on that board who are not mentioned.

I would say that the new board's commitment to good governance will obviously result in enhanced shareholder value. However, it is still necessary that Bill 80, the bill we're talking about here tonight, is passed in order to ensure that the people of Ontario are protected against excessive provisions in some current contracts of Hydro One executives. Under this proposed legislation, interim board members would have a mandate to negotiate to substantially reduce the total compensation for the top five executives of Hydro One and to review the compensation package of all other officers.

They've stood up, they've complained about the compensation packages of Hydro One, not just the severance packages but all the compensation packages of the executives at Hydro One. Yet this legislation mandates that the interim board negotiate to substantially reduce the total compensation of the top executives of Hydro One. Why won't they stand in their place and support that and say it's a good thing? I'm waiting to hear some member opposite say, "The public perception, the guy in the street is opposed to those compensation packages." Well, this bill mandates the new board to reduce them and negotiate reduced salaries. Why they're opposed to that is beyond me.

The review of compensation packages reflects Hydro One's need to attract and retain talented executives, balanced against the expectations of Ontarians for fair and reasonable compensation packages.

Bill 80 also provides that during the period of negotiation, any officer who retires, resigns or is terminated would receive only those pension or severance entitlements as defined by the legislation. In other words, you can't cut and leave quickly and get some of these enriched severance deals that have been put on the table. That's protection the bill provides. So again, why members opposite are delaying this bill and holding it up is beyond me. It's a surprise to me, quite frankly, that they rise in the House and complain so vociferously about this.

I do want to go back and say one thing. We don't expect that we're going to get these top five executives and other executives at Hydro One to work for \$25,000, \$35,000 or \$45,000. It's unreasonable to think that's going to be the case. Executives in these positions in like companies all over the world and North America—sometimes it's a very competitive salary base to have executives at this level. So these people will still make

several hundred thousand dollars, I'm sure, because in order to attract good quality people, those are the salaries you have to pay. That's not a problem.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): It's like being an MPP.

Mr Maves: The member opposite is worried that MPPs need to get paid more in order to attract better MPPs. I do believe this is a competitive industry. If you look at all the big energy companies in the States and their salaries—and I have; I've seen a table of all the salaries of the executives in these positions—a lot of them are a lot higher than our people are making, I'll tell you that right now. You do have to pay a competitive wage and we want to pay a competitive wage, but we just want some of these offensive provisions, like the severance packages that were put in place, removed. Again, this bill mandates that that happen.

It's very easy for me to stand in the House tonight and support Bill 80. I was surprised and disappointed that the members opposite haven't seen fit earlier than this point to push this bill through quicker. Why? The bill does everything they've been asking for. I think we can all agree on the contents of the bill. The bill is what they've been asking for. It's what we've wanted to do for several weeks now. By holding it up, you're only hurting Ontario taxpayers. As the member for Hamilton West mentioned, the guy in the street is offended by some of these provisions. This bill deals with some of these provisions that the guy in the street is offended with. That's why we introduced it. That's why we're increasingly disappointed that we're just not getting co-operation from members opposite on this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'd like to congratulate my colleagues from St Paul's and Hamilton West for their remarks. I actually found the remarks of the member for Niagara Falls very interesting as well.

We don't have a problem with the new interim board. They're fine people. That's not the issue. The issue is why it took so long for you to see that there was such a huge compensation problem. We've gone on record as saying that severances should be open. I have a private member's bill on that which was unanimously passed by this House on second reading. Mind you, that happened once before on a previous severance bill, and that died the first time the House was prorogued.

The member opposite referred to another member saying the guy on the street gets very upset at these huge compensation packages. Of course they do. I guess my question to you is, why didn't you know about the \$6-million severance golden parachute? That's an obscene amount of money for a severance package at any level, including the private level. But private and public are two different things. The shareholders make those decisions in a private company, and who are we to question that? Where it is obscene is when the public shareholders, in this case the taxpayers, don't even have a say in what these severance packages are, and that is what happened

here. That is because there is a gap in the sunshine law that you brought out with respect to salaries where severances aren't covered.

I would urge you to consider expanding this, and not just for Hydro One but for all public sector executives, so that there are open and reasonable severance packages. Considering what a lot of people in the province have to go through to make ends meet, that's the very least we can do for morale in this province and in the public sector as well. I think there's nothing wrong with making severance packages in Hydro One reasonable; that's what we've been calling for. Two things: (1) Why did it take so long? (2) Let's extend this to public sector severances throughout the province.

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The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Bisson: Thank you very much, the Speaker from Manitoulin Island, I think it is—anyway. Algoma-Manitoulin.

To the member for Niagara Falls: interesting conversation we heard here tonight because, if I'm to believe what the member is saying, they found out about these severance packages some time this May and then decided to do something about it, and he's mad that we, the opposition, supposedly are holding up the solution. That's the gist of the debate.

Let's take a look at that. First of all, I listened to the Minister of Energy, who said in the beginning, "Oh, I only found out about this some time in May," came back into the House afterwards and said, "Oh no, I've known about this all the time; everybody's known about this all the time." So I have to believe the Minister of Energy at one of his words and, for the sake of the argument, I'll choose that you guys always knew. If that's the case, if you always knew about these severance packages and you always knew about the wages and did nothing, then it means to say you guys were complicit in the decision and basically all this bill is about is trying to save political face. Or, you knew and did nothing. If that's the case, then you guys were asleep at the switch and basically are incompetent. Or, let's take the other argument from the minister: the minister says he doesn't know and didn't know anything. This board was appointed by your government in 1999, so if that's the case and if I'm to believe one of the minister's versions, that he knew nothing, then it means to say that you guys were asleep at the switch. So which one was it?

Howard Hampton and the New Democrats have said there is a solution to this. When we found out, we brought forward legislation that basically sets legislation at a comparable rate to other public utilities across the country, such as Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia. We're saying to you, there is a way of fixing this. Accept the private member's bill that's been put forward by Howard Hampton. It'll deal with your issue and at the same time make sure that the taxpayers and the ratepayers of this province aren't stuck on the hook for a great big golden parachute that's being set up for Eleanor Clitheroe and others at Hydro One.

Mr McDonald: I just want to thank my friend from Niagara Falls for being so eloquent in his words about the new board that has been installed. The experience of these individuals who have been appointed by the Premier and this government shows that this government is on track and will straighten out some of the past decisions of that previous board which this bill is trying to correct.

It still surprises me today that the opposition, the Liberals and the NDP, are holding it up. On one hand they're advocating that there need to be changes; they're telling us this was a terrible thing. Of course when the government tries to introduce a bill, Bill 80, to say, "You know what? Let's correct this today and install these people," the opposition—the Liberals and the NDP—stand up and go, "Well, we're not going to support it now." They asked for it and now they're saying that they don't want it and they're not going to support it. I find that kind of confusing, but I've only been here a short period of time.

Sometimes you have to be careful what you ask for—you might get it. Obviously this might be the case. They've come here and said that they want changes. The government's making changes and now they don't want changes.

I guess what I'm a little curious about is—if the Liberals will tell us—maybe they don't want to support Bill 80, because I haven't heard a stance that they're taking on this. They're basically saying, "No, we're not going to support Bill 80." Maybe in the next 10 or 15 seconds you might stand up and say, "Yes, we agree with the government. We don't want those people to get paid that money and we support this bill."

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I want to get the support of my friend from Niagara Falls. First of all, I have to report to Gary Pillitteri, the federal member, what he was saying about the federal Liberals.

All I ask is this of my friend from Niagara Falls: if the news media ask these ministers the same questions they asked the ministers in Ottawa and they do the same FOI, freedom of information request, then we might see a similar pattern. But I'll put that aside, because I want to enlist the support of my friend, which I know I will get, for the Beck 3 project. That's to do with hydro, of course.

In Niagara Falls we have an opportunity to develop yet another hydroelectric power source. We can call it Beck 3. The Sir Adam Beck stations are very well known in Niagara Falls. Let me tell you the value of it, and I'm sure the member would agree. First of all, it would create jobs for people in the Niagara area. That's the early benefit of it. But the longer-term benefit would be that it would produce electrical power over the years at a competitive price, particularly when you compare what the environmental costs are going to be as reflected in the true costs of electricity as years go by. Third, speaking environmentally, it is virtually benign. It is certainly benign in terms of its air pollution, and virtually benign other than that. Much of the work has been done. One of his predecessors, Vince Kerrio, when he was the Minister

of Natural Resources and Minister of Energy, certainly was a great proponent of that project. We saw some preliminary work being done. That preliminary work has progressed, and I am very confident that my friend from Niagara Falls would agree with me that proceeding with the Beck 3 project would be very good for Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Maves: I thank all my colleagues in the Legislature for their comments. To the member for St Catharines, I'm several steps ahead of you on this one. I've been working on Beck 3 for quite some time and it would be a good project. Actually, the Beck 3 power plant, the new power plant, is a little bit out of the question right now. However, an extra tunnel is something we've been after for some time, and that tunnel alone would cost \$500 million.

The one problem we have at this point in time, it is my understanding, is that we want this to be in a proper business case. That project brings in power at about four and a half cents. As you would know, right now we can't continue to ask OPG to do something that's going to make them run at a deficit and add to their debt. If the power is going to be four and a half cents, right now the average price of power in Ontario has plummeted since we opened the market to about 3.25 cents a kilowatt hour. So at this point in time we still have to work on improving the business case of that project. Obviously, I would love to see that project go ahead in my riding.

Thanks to the member for Nipissing for his kind comments.

To the member for Hamilton Mountain, I know her bill will come before the committee on public accounts, at which I sit with her colleague Mr Gerretsen, and we will give that due consideration.

To the member for Timmins-James Bay, I will speak slowly. I have said several times now to the member for Timmins-James Bay that these excessive severance packages weren't actually put in place until May 17 this year, and it was those—

Mrs Bountrogianni: That's not true.

Mr Maves: Not the compensation packages. The minister said the compensation packages are a matter of public knowledge. It was the excessive severance packages that were the last straw. Those were negotiated on May 17. The minister found out about them, contacted the Hydro board and told them to act appropriately. They did not. On June 4 we introduced this bill. We still haven't passed it. Please help us out.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate.

Mr Gerretsen: I'm very pleased to join this debate tonight to give you my view of the situation. First of all, we on this side support this bill. Obviously, we support this bill. But let's go back a little bit and talk about how this bill was introduced here and how your government House leader basically tried to get us to vote on it sight unseen. You may recall that he brought the bill in after there was this publicity about the fact that the board wasn't going to change its mind about the compensation packages, and he expected us to vote on it the same day,

without anybody having seen the bill. Nobody had seen a copy of the bill, other than the government House leader and presumably some other backroom people. He presented the bill to the House and wanted us to vote on it. We said, "Of course not. We want to know what's in the bill. We want to have the right to read the bill."

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We know quite well that you've been accustomed over the last number of years to putting hostages in bills, sections that people at first didn't think were going to be in a particular bill and that did something totally different than the bill was intended to do. That's point number one; we wanted to know what was in the bill.

Secondly, after we knew what was in the bill and it had been distributed to everyone, which I think was within the next 24 hours, our House leader gave your House leader a letter in which he unequivocally said, "We will support the bill immediately for second and third readings if you do two things. Number one, cancel the exemption of freedom of information for Hydro One and OPG." In other words, what the people of Ontario have to understand is that currently, Hydro One and OPG, Ontario Power Generation, which are the two companies of the original Ontario Hydro, are not subject to the freedom-of-information laws of this province. You'd ask yourself why. The sole shareholder of both of these companies is the government of Ontario, the people of Ontario as represented through the government. Why should these two large corporations be exempt from freedom of information? So that was the first condition he put on it.

The second was that once the bill was given second reading, there would be two days of legislative hearings right here at Queen's Park, at which time the committee members from all sides of the House—and remember, on all committees you hold the majority—would be allowed to examine under oath the people who had been involved in making these decisions; in other words, the president of Hydro One, various board members and perhaps some other senior staff people. Your House leader and your government, by their actions, said, "No, we're not going to do that."

Under those circumstances, do you expect us to just unilaterally give you the right to give second and third readings to a law that basically deals with a situation that you yourself as a government have created?

I've heard an awful lot over the last couple of weeks as to when the minister knew and when he let the Premier know, and everything that goes along with that. Quite frankly, I personally don't care whether he knew one day instead of the next day or instead of a week before that. The simple point of fact is that this information was known by a Minister of Energy as long ago as two or three years. Yes, the packages became extremely excessive within the last two or three months, but let nobody be under any impression that the salaries weren't excessive well before that.

I happened to be at one time the chairman of the Ontario Housing Corp, having been appointed by one

government and reappointed by another government, and I'm a great believer in the notion that the government of the day should be able to appoint the chairs of its various boards and commissions. I really believe that through the various boards and commissions that a government operates by, it extends the policy direction of that particular government. I've always believed in the notion that the government of the day should be able to appoint the chairs of the various boards and commissions that are out there.

I can tell you that when I was the chairman of the Ontario Housing Corp from 1989 to 1992 and then extended for a while, and then later on as a board member until after I got elected here in June 1995, there were regular meetings between the board, or at least the chair of the board, and the minister who was responsible to that board. I for the life of me cannot see any other situation that could possibly occur. So if the Minister of Energy, whoever that happened to be from time to time, didn't know what was going on on some of the major decisions that were taking place within that board, in this case within Ontario Hydro, then I would say that minister was negligent, regardless of what government was in power. If the minister didn't know, he was negligent. I can't for the life of me see a situation where these kinds of excessive salaries that have been paid within Ontario Hydro over the last four to five years, and maybe well before that, were not known to whoever happened to be the minister of the day. I quite simply say this: if he knew, he should have taken action at the time—or if she knew, action should have been taken at the time. If they didn't know, they were negligent in not getting that knowledge.

I don't get too hung up as to whether or not this particular minister knew on a given day or if it was a day before or whatever, other than the fact that he may have misspoken in the House or he may have made an incorrect statement here. I'll just leave it at that. But for the government to have the general public believe the notion that the minister took action right away but he didn't know anything about it until sometime in early May, quite frankly I totally and absolutely reject that, because he either knew or he should have known, and if he didn't know, he was negligent. That's the long and the short of it.

Having said all that, let me just say that some of the sections of this particular bill—this has already been raised, I believe, by the member from Hamilton West—to try to correct this act are pretty stern. To take away an individual's right to sue for compensation and their rights as a citizen—I know what the government intended here; they were going to take stiff action, and the only way to do it was to take away that individual's rights—to take somebody's rights away, I take very seriously.

I don't for a moment want you to believe I'm taking it up for the four executives who were exorbitantly paid; this bill is now going to cut back their salary situation. But if this becomes standard practice, if a government wants to correct the errors it has made by taking the kind

of drastic action that is suggested in some of these sections—by taking away the civil rights of individuals who may feel they have been wronged, not being able to resort to court actions in order to protect their own rights—I would say we are rapidly on the road to becoming much less of a democratic society. I think that is something surely, in the larger scheme of things, we all wouldn't be in favour of, to say the least.

Let's talk about the larger issue. Why did Ontario Hydro even become an issue in the first place? Again, we've heard an awful lot about the stranded debt of about \$20 billion, that there is about \$18 billion worth of assets and the total debt is about \$38 billion, so about \$20 billion of the debt isn't covered.

I take a slightly different point of view. I personally believe that governments over the last 100 years, of whatever political stripe, have quite often or always used the electricity rates in this province as a method of economic development. If it wanted to get a certain business into this province that was going to provide a lot of jobs, no matter what sector we're talking about, particularly the kind of industry that was going to use a lot of electrical power, in those particular cases low electricity rates have always been used in order to get those jobs into this province. It has been done for 100 years. No wonder, after selling power at below the real cost in order to attract those businesses, you're going to run up debt. Yes, a large part of this stranded debt may very well be due to inefficiency, to mismanagement and all that sort of thing, but I also happen to believe a fair chunk of it is due to the economic policies that have been practised by governments of all sides. So to take the kind of harsh view toward this whole thing that maybe we've done I don't think is quite correct.

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In any event, back in early December Mr Harris decided he was going to sell the generation grid in this province, basically Hydro One, the grid that ties the generating capacity to the distribution capacity on the other side. The reason they're selling it, the only business case I've ever heard that the government has made for this, is, "We wanted to get rid of some of our debt." It always reminds me of a situation where in order to get rid of your debt you sell your house because you don't like the mortgage you're paying any more. Now, in this case I realize it was a lot worse than that, because the mortgage in effect was worth twice the amount the house was worth. But still, why would you want to sell the asset that supports the debt, which in effect you're doing by selling Hydro One? You'd be left, at the end of the day, with the debt and absolutely no asset to ever hope to even be able to cut into the repayment of the stranded debt situation.

By the way, we've heard that Premier Eves has now decided to take Ms Witmer's suggestion—she made it during the leadership campaign that the Tories had—of perhaps not selling Hydro One. Of course, when we take a look at the budget document, it doesn't quite work out that way. As has already been mentioned, and I think it's on—what is it?—page 57 of the budget, it's kind of

interesting: when you look on the revenue side of things, and unfortunately most governments tend to take a look more on the expenditure side of things than on the revenue side of the equation, we see that sales and rentals under "Other Revenue" that the government intends to get this year has gone up from \$586 million, which is quite a substantial amount, to \$2.4 billion. In other words—what is that?—five times the amount that we sold in assets last year.

As was suggested by the member from Scarborough-Agincourt today, and I'm not quite sure whether the Premier confirmed this or denied it, or whether he gave any answer to it at all, a significant sum of money that is included in this \$2.4 billion is from the sale of maybe not all of Hydro One but 49% of Hydro One. I would like somebody on the government side to address that. I mean, certainly the media have portrayed the idea that you're no longer interested in selling Hydro One at this time, and I'm sure there are an awful lot of people out there who somehow think the sale of Hydro One is off the table right now. Well, I think the people of Ontario should know that maybe the sale of the controlling interest of Hydro One is off the table but certainly not the sale of 49% of Hydro One.

I would like this government to take the further courageous step—because they've taken a courageous step, they've changed their mind on the issue, and it takes some courage to do that. By the way, I don't think there's anything wrong with changing your mind. If we didn't change our mind about anything around here, you could very easily say, "What's the sense of talking about anything?" So they've already changed their mind. First they were going to sell the whole thing, and now presumably they're down to, "Well, we may sell 49%," and I don't regard it as a bad thing. People can make their own judgment as to whether that's a good or a bad thing. But I don't think the government changing its mind occasionally about a situation, particularly when there's an awful lot of public sentiment about it and no good reason has been given for taking a certain action, is necessarily a bad thing.

What I would like the government to do is to take that next step now and to say, "OK, we're not going to sell any of it. We recognize the fact that the hydro grid that's out there, which the people of Ontario have collectively built over the last 100 years, all those transmission lines that go from one end of the province to the other end of the province, will remain in public hands and will not be sold. By not selling it, we don't mean we're not going to sell the majority of it; no, we're not going to sell it at all." That's what I would like to hear the government say, because, as I indicated before, their budget document certainly indicates that they have included on the revenue side of things almost an extra \$1.9 billion, and presumably a lot of that can be attributed to the sale of 49% of Hydro One, which of course leads you to the next question: OK, if they plan to sell Hydro One, or 49% of it, for \$1.9 billion, and if they don't, what's going to happen at the end of the year? The spin the government

members tried to put on the whole budget yesterday was, "We've got a balanced budget," but if you don't sell it, you don't have a balanced budget; presumably you're going to be \$1.9 billion short at the end of the year, which is a fairly significant amount on a budget of about \$63 billion to \$64 billion. I would say \$1.9 billion on \$64 billion is probably in the neighbourhood of 2% to 3%.

I can tell you that we do support this bill, but I think you have to take some responsibility for the boards that you have put together, that you have appointed. Everybody looks at the old Hydro board as being the bad old board, but you appointed each and every member of that board in exactly the same way you appointed each and every member of the new board and you have to take responsibility for what the board does. Does that mean that a board is totally hamstrung by what a government wants to do on a day-to-day basis? No, but certainly a board has to take direction from the government in its overall philosophy, in its overall way of doing things, in its overall direction etc. For whatever reason, either through negligence or through straight lack of knowing—or you did know and you're not telling us about it—you did not have that with respect to the Hydro One board.

My own personal perception is this: if this had not become a public outcry from the general public and through the media six or eight weeks ago, nothing would have been done by now—absolutely nothing. We'd probably either never know about it or we'd hear about it a year or two from now, when perhaps the company would have been sold. Maybe in a scary sort of way it's a wakeup call for the people of Ontario, that with this horrendous situation happening as far as the executive salaries are concerned, it was a method by which in effect the sale of Hydro One could be stopped.

I will wind up now, because I know there are other members who will want to speak on this as well.

I would simply say this to the government: you have the right to appoint particularly the chairs of the various boards and commissions that operate under your general direction and I, as one individual member who has been in that position for two governments in the past, simply will not accept the fact that you did not know about these excessive salaries that have been paid at Hydro One for the last two to three to four years, up until a month or six weeks ago, or whatever.

Mr Bradley: And OPG.

Mr Gerretsen: And OPG as well. They make a big deal over the fact that, "Yes, isn't it a horrible situation that the president of Hydro One made \$2.1 million—but on the other hand, the president of OPG only made \$1.6 million," and that's somehow OK.

Mr Bradley: He got a bonus too.

Mr Gerretsen: And a bonus etc. All of that's not OK. I would think that the government has learned a lesson and hopefully the people's reaction to that lesson has been in the long run to save Hydro One from a huge mistake.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

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Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I just want to say that I appreciated the speech of the member from Kingston. He always has some insightful thoughts on issues before the Legislature. I have to agree with a lot of what he said tonight. I think this government likes to play games with a lot of what it has responsibility for and does not take seriously the leadership it is called to exercise by the people of this province when it is elected. There's a sense across the way, perhaps counterbalanced in some way by a sense on this side, I guess particularly in this caucus, that if the private sector does it, it's got to be right. There's this private sector discipline that they talk about all the time; there seems to be some high value out there that we should be able to measure everything against, and if we do that, at the end of the day we'll all be better served and it'll be OK.

Of course, on this side we oftentimes go overboard in saying that if it's run by the public sector, then it's the correct way to go. I think we've discovered over the years that there are things that are run best in the private sector; there are things—certainly government services, the oversight of things like our health care system, water and the environment—that are best left in the hands of the public, where government accountable to the people is called to account.

In this instance we have a body that is very much in the public realm overseeing the delivery of a commodity that is very important to almost everything we do in our daily life, and the government needs to understand that they will be and are being held accountable.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I am standing to achieve a couple of objectives. The first is to acknowledge the comments made by the esteemed opposition member from Kingston and the Islands. The second is to put the viewer on notice that I will be speaking in a very short time, so stay tuned. I want to say hello to my wife, as well. She is probably in the midst of doing her report cards, because it's nearing the end of the school year.

On a serious note, I am very pleased to see something on the record that hopefully isn't going to change radically when the next Liberal speaker gets up. The Leader of the Opposition, with all respect, has had several positions on this. One of the speakers earlier said to sort of date-stamp them. Some of those announcements have been time-dated or stale-dated.

I really feel, though, that each of us wants to have safe, reliable and affordable power. No one in this House would agree with the astronomical remuneration packages that have been set up in a relatively non-competitive environment, a monopolistic kind of job. They're not in competition with Ford or Chrysler or Duke Energy or whatever.

To say that those were appropriate salaries—and I'll get into some more detail in the limited time that I'll have—that those were appropriate compensations, somebody should have spoken to Ms Harvey or someone. Where did she get her expertise? I'm not too sure either.

I worked at a small company, General Motors, for about 30 years, for 10 in personnel, and I did salary administration—at a very low level, of course; not at this level. There was always a comparator base. I'd like to hear what the comparator base was. Who were they in competition with? Of course, the opposition don't want competition. They want the monopoly.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): First of all, I want to congratulate the member for Kingston and the Islands for his speech. I just wonder, when I look at subsections 9(1) and (2) of the bill, are we not agreed on this agreement between the minister and the head of Hydro One? When I look at the content of this bill, I just wonder, how far can we go after this government has agreed? When I looked on March 23 at the minister who I believe signed the agreement with this Eleanor Clitheroe—definitely this agreement has gone to a lawyer to rectify it and to agree upon it. Today we're saying, "No, we want to rescind the agreement that we agreed upon." I really believe that whoever is involved in this agreement is subject to be sued at the present time.

When I listened last Thursday to the member for Scarborough East, he said, "You people on the other side know the mess we are in. Hydro One got us \$38 billion in the red and this is why we want to get rid of it." My position on this was always, if you don't have the proper management in place, just replace it. Today, this government is saying, "We've had the wrong management operating Hydro One." They want to sell the whole thing, after the court said, "No, you cannot sell it, because you didn't approach the citizens of Ontario." But today in the budget we're saying that we'll be selling over \$1 billion of our Hydro One shares to the private sector.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments? Questions or comments?

Mr Bradley: I'm glad that the member for Durham was not able to secure a member to get up in time.

I want to compliment the member for Kingston and the Islands on his address this evening as well. What he has really pointed out is that the people on the other side, the government, have been aware for a long time that we have excessive salaries at both Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation, that these folks have been making a lot more money than the public was aware of. The government was well aware of this. The previous minister, Jim Wilson, as we would know him on a personal basis—the Honourable James Wilson said he used to meet with Hydro officials on a regular basis and give them advice, and they gave him advice. So they were well aware of the salary structure. They were quite satisfied with it over there, because they're used to running with people who make that kind of money. Those are the people who show up at their fundraisers, so they're very familiar with those people.

They didn't take any action until the heat came on. That seems to be the way the Eves government operates: "We'll just coast along, and then if we get some heat, we'll just get up and say anything at the time, and the problem will be solved."

Interjections.

Mr Bradley: I always hear interjections. I'm very amused when I hear the other side talk about changing positions, because Premier Eves has had six different positions. He had one when he was running for the leadership—everybody should have listened at that time to Elizabeth Witmer, who was a candidate; then after he became the leader; and then, to save the by-election, he says, "All off the table"; then it was back on the table; and then the heat built up again and it's off the table again. So there were six different positions. So when I hear people over there lecture about flip-flops, my friend Ernie is the king of flip-flops.

The Acting Speaker: Now we'll have a response from the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr Gerretsen: I'd like to thank the members from Sault St Marie, Durham, Glengarry-Prescott-Russell and St Catharines for their comments.

Quite frankly, I think we've got it all wrong in this place. I don't think the people out there care whether you change your mind or not; life is like that. As long as what you do in the long term is right for the people of Ontario, that's all that matters. And the right thing—

Interjections.

Mr Gerretsen: Oh, forget your excuses.

Look, the right thing is not to sell Hydro One. The right thing is to hold on to the electricity highway so that we don't get involved in the same mistakes that you did, for example, with the sale of Highway 407. Because you see, in this particular case, there is no other electricity highway.

Would somebody please stand up and give me one good reason why you want to sell it? Because no good reason has been given over the last six months. Would somebody also please stand up and tell me why the freedom of information legislation should not apply to Hydro One and OPG? There's only one shareholder: the government, the people, all of us. Why don't you want the freedom of information legislation to apply? Would somebody please get up and tell me what is so wrong with a legislative committee—which you control—meeting for a couple of days and interviewing and holding hearings and listening to what the board of directors, the senior management people of Ontario Hydro, have to say? What are you hiding? Why don't you want the truth to come out?

That's the bottom line. You must be hiding something, or else you'd say, "Yes, of course we have the right to have freedom of information apply to it. Of course we will have hearings so we can hear from these people"—

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The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate? Here is the long-awaited speech from the member from Durham.

Mr O'Toole: It's hard to say where to begin. This saga, I believe, started long before this debate and long before the previous debate. I recall with some clarity the Macdonald commission report, which was really the start of the analysis in 1995. I believe the report was filed in

early 1996. Donald Macdonald was the Treasurer, and Minister of Energy as well, in the federal Trudeau government, a man held in some respect in the business and academic community and in the world of trade and commerce.

I think that commission was really taken up as a result of some of the findings during the NDP reign of terror. During that period I believe it was Maurice Strong who set the most public record for his salary. I believe it was initially \$1 a year and then it was \$1 million a year. I think his most notorious achievement was the attempt to acquire a rainforest in Brazil to offset emission credits.

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): Costa Rica.

Mr O'Toole: Costa Rica, yes. The esteemed Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation is here listening and certainly taking notes.

I also want to go back as far as possible—I just don't want to go back too far, but I'll start with Sir Adam Beck. I was walking down University Avenue earlier today. There's a bronze monument to Sir Adam Beck. I stopped and, reflecting on the fact that I would be speaking tonight, I sort of bowed or stooped respectfully to the monument. I think I perhaps perceived or noticed that he was grinning. It may have been a water stain or something. I thought, if he was only here, because his motto was "Power at cost." Cost is a complex little model. It certainly doesn't include the \$6-million golden parachute stuff. It was a tribute at that time, making Ontario the great province it is. To a large extent, they were hard-working, dedicated, loyal civil servants who ran it.

Under the grand stewardship of the governments of the day—there were 40-some years there continuous and uninterrupted, with the exception of that one 1937 Liberal government—they burned that Premier in effigy, I think, at General Motors in Oshawa. But the history is that it did build the infrastructure that built the industrial heartland of this country, that is, this great province of Ontario.

Many of us in the generations born since the 1940s and forward, up until perhaps the 1960s and 1970s, enjoyed power at cost, really. What happened in the nuclear debate in the 1970s in my riding of Durham—and I'm reflecting respectfully on my constituents, many of whom work at Darlington or Pickering and are knowledgeable technical people. It was unusual because the Darlington generating station came in initially I believe under the Bill Davis government and conceptually was scoped out as a project of around \$4 billion. In fact, by the time it was finished—these are public records—I think it was something in the order of \$14 billion. So there was already clear evidence of no management at the top. Whether the management was communicating with the government of whatever stripe is another issue. I think they became quite divorced. In fact, some would say that during the Peterson government it was really an economic tool. It became more an instrument of government economic policy causing the OPG to accrue some debt.

I really feel that the problems were evident when Maurice Strong was brought in as a turnaround management guy. The Macdonald commission, which I just outlined, recommended clearly that choices were there, the choices being generation as a piece, transmission as a piece, distribution as a piece, and getting rid of some of the non-core business assets that were really being funded or subsidized through the taxpayer.

There was always in the Power Corporation Act a very important component of the cost of power. That was referred to under the act as the SDR, strategic debt retirement. There were occasions that this was paying back the debt, which was capital to build the nuclear plants—Pickering, Darlington and Bruce. Those plants, by the way, never operated at full capacity—something in the order of around 60% to 70% of operating capacity. They were advertising power at three cents a kilowatt. In fact, the real cost was probably five cents a kilowatt. All of this, Macdonald concluded, was because of the lack of competition and accountability. That became more and more self-evident, I think.

After the Macdonald commission they had another plan, and I'm going to wrap up here on some of the history. They had what was called NAOP, the nuclear asset optimization plan. That was around 1997.

There was a select all-party committee: Sean Conway, I believe that Mr Bradley was on it, I believe that Mr Christopherson was on it, Floyd Laughren was on that committee, Helen Johns, myself and the esteemed Dr Galt. Basically, that approved an expenditure of around \$4 billion to retube the nuclear assets. That's really what it said. They hired some guy, Andognini, who was a turnaround management guy in the nuclear industry, an American, at about a \$1 million-a-year salary. The idea there was to turn it around. But still, clearly, that didn't turn it around. Bruce A still has not operated and the Pickering A still isn't operating. We see that they have run over cost there.

When it comes down to the Hydro One share op, even more recently, when they were trying to bulk up their asset value before the market opened up, they were buying customers' shares, again as part of a bond issue they raised, which was more debt.

I just want to show some respect for what this means to my riding. I'm going to avoid my esteemed member for Niagara Falls. I had copied the biographies of all the new interim board members, some of whom are known to all of us here as Orders of Canada, esteemed people from all walks and all parties.

If I read the bill, there are important sections that clearly mandate a couple of important requirements—the term of office. But I think the most important part is probably section 8: the duties of the officers is to "negotiate with each of the designated officers for a new employment contract that, in the opinion of the board, provides for a substantial reduction in the officer's remuneration and benefits." There are other sections here with respect to termination. Sections 9 and 10 are worth reading in this small, little Bill 80, on which I believe

some would say the government acted—at least they acted. But in fact, Minister Stockwell told us he was told of this situation around May 17 and the bill was introduced on June 4. The board has been appointed; I see that has happened as well. The board has resigned. They realized the gig was up.

I really feel that you need expert people, but this isn't a truly competitive environment. The transmission: I've heard from experts, and I can cite their names, that this is not competitive. It's a natural monopoly. It's not rocket science. They have skilled people who are there, they have not changed—the line people and the electrical people etc—and they're regulated to the ends of the earth by the IMO and the energy board. So I'm not sure exactly what they were inventing to make \$2 million a year.

In my remaining minute or two I want to pay respect to an organization in my riding, Veridian Corp, which is the local municipal electric association that was formed out of a partnership of Ajax, Pickering, Clarington and Belleville. It is referred to as Veridian. For the record, I want to pay some respect to John Wiersma, who is the president and CEO. I spoke with John this morning. Wayne Arthurs is the mayor of Pickering. He's on the board. Rick Johnson is a councillor in Pickering. James Mason is the president of Pefco Ontario, distributor of utility products. Nancy Maxwell is a business consultant. Jim McMaster is an Ajax councillor. John Mutton is the mayor of Clarington. Steve Parish is mayor of the town of Ajax. Doug Parker is a Belleville councillor. John Randolph is chair of Managing Partner, the Clinton Group. Pauline Storks, who has been with the Municipal Electric Association for many years, is past chair of the MEA. Ralph Sutton is a retired manager of Bell Canada. George Van Dyk is a real estate broker and a respected businessman. Jim Witty is the former chair of Durham region and owner of Witty Insurance.

These people assure me that local municipal electric authorities are accountable. Their main shareholders are the municipalities. They will deliver safe, reliable and affordable power in competition with Hydro One. I put to you that the local distribution systems should become part of the discussion of what part of Hydro One is being sold. I want to be on the record saying that this board change is fundamentally important and that this government has taken the action once and for all to deal with this decade of scandal.

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The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I wish the member from Durham had had a little more time than his 10 minutes, because there's nothing I personally like better than a little bit of discussion on the history of electrical energy development in Ontario, particularly the concept of power at cost, which the member began talking about.

Power at cost is something that I actually continue to believe in, although I long believed that what we had to determine was exactly what the cost was. In fact we, in

the last year of our government, set up a class environmental assessment to try and find out what the true costs of electricity were in this province. It's unfortunate that one of the first actions of the New Democratic Party government was to cancel a class environmental assessment on electricity. I wish we had the benefit of that knowledge, then.

But power at cost today, under this government, would be something quite different. We'd have to take into the cost of electricity those outrageous salaries that this government has finally been pushed to acknowledge and deal with. We'd have to take into account these huge severance packages sitting there in the bank, ready to be capitalized on. All that would certainly inflate the cost of electricity.

Then the member touched on Darlington. I'm not sure exactly what that has to do with the bill in front of us today, but I can appreciate why the member for Durham wants to talk about Darlington. Even I remember something about Darlington. I wasn't here when the Conservative government decided to build Darlington, but I inherited some of the mess of the Tory government of the day that started and stopped and started and stopped and let this drag on and drag on until the cost became prohibitive. That is exactly why we have this huge so-called stranded debt that we're trying to deal with today.

I suggest that Mr Eves, who was there and is now our Premier, is still starting and stopping and starting and stopping when it comes to electricity policy.

This government in fact is not interested in power at cost any longer. They want to talk exclusively about private sector discipline. So far, all we've seen of private sector discipline is private sector salaries and severance packages without the willingness of the private sector to subject those to full public disclosure.

Mr Christopherson: It's always enjoyable to listen to the member from Durham. I thought it was interesting that he said the gig is up. I suspect that if you continue to treat issues the way you're treating this one, the gig will be up for all of you in the next election. I say that as someone who has experience in this area, so I know of what I speak.

I want to take great exception to some of the closing comments my friend made about the fact that this government is now dealing with this issue—I jotted it down—"once and for all." Quite frankly, the reality couldn't be further from what he stated. To deal with this once and for all would mean that you bring in legislation that says the board can only approve wages for the senior officers within a range. Then, if you state what that range is, you'd have a better chance of being able to argue that this is dealt with once and for all. But how can it possibly be, when all you've done is replicate exactly the same structure and process that got us where we are today? You appointed the board. The board approved the massive increases in the wages and benefits and severance of the senior executives of Hydro One. You then bring in a bill that fires all those people and says there have to be negotiations—that's what's in the bill, section 8—to

substantially reduce those wages. And who decided what is a substantial reduction? The board, which you appoint.

Were the member from Durham on this side of the House and we were proposing something that ludicrous, I know he'd be all over it. The fact of the matter is that you haven't solved the problem; you're hoping it'll just go away on its own.

Mr Maves: It's always a pleasure for me to rise and speak for a few minutes after the very learned member from Durham, Mr O'Toole, has spoken on any issue in this Legislature. He speaks with such a great background on so many issues and he's someone who does his homework very well and very thoroughly. His speech once again tonight was an excellent one. I do find it interesting that he talked about power at cost and about doing a curtsey or a bow at the foot of Sir Adam Beck's statue down on University Avenue.

The member from Thunder Bay said she believes in power at cost. However, I would say to her that your belief in power at cost seems to be that you have some feeling that power at cost in a monopoly is lower than power at cost when there are many competitors. It is a simple fact of economics that when you have many competitors selling a product, the cost of that product will be lower than if you have a monopoly.

Why? Year after year at the old Ontario Hydro, employees got hired and added on. When they used to come out with the salary disclosure, you could go through Ontario Hydro and see page after page of people making well over \$100,000. When there is competition, when there is the benefit of the marketplace at work, those managers at Ontario Hydro start to say, "You know what? We can't hire brothers and cousins and uncles and everybody else all the time. We can't hire extra management, just hide people and make up for it with a higher price or higher debt." She may want that to continue to happen. It couldn't happen, and everyone in Ontario knew that.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I'm pleased to respond to the member for Durham. I think it's instructive, because he went through a long history about hydro. It's important to reflect on that, because Ontario, by and large, has a good history on hydro despite problems in the last 10 years. The long-term history is something I think we all should reflect positively on.

But in terms of the history of this month, I'll remind the member opposite and the government that this bill was never intended to be here. This is cleaning up a mess, an awful mess, and it's not a mess that this government or any other government should be proud of. The question before public policy-makers today is, what is the appropriate structure and framework for the operation of Hydro? The compelling case for Hydro One, the overwhelming evidence, is that it should remain in public hands. It makes a profit, a big profit. It's an important part of our economic infrastructure that ought to stay in public hands. There's no compelling business case for this.

The way the government has handled this bill particularly, and I'm surprised the member didn't mention it, has been nothing short of a joke. They have changed their position on Hydro One probably five times, as recently as yesterday. I say to the government, that kind of public policy is not going to serve anyone well, least of all the people of this province.

Keep Hydro One in public hands, 100% in public hands. It has made a profit. But you've got to deal with lots of other things in a consistent manner as well. I say to the member, I respect his point of view, I respect his arguments, but he made no case at all for privatization of Hydro One, and I remind him that this bill is not one the government wants to have to deal with.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr O'Toole: With unanimous consent, I could probably spend another hour on that.

I want to thank the members from Thunder Bay, Hamilton West, Niagara Falls and Windsor-St Clair, and dwell for some time on the challenge that has been made with respect to price.

I'm just calling on the opposition, those few members who are here, and the third party—and I think the House leader for the Liberal Party, Mr Duncan, has said it: that this thing is to clean up some issues. I call on the House leader: why are they holding this up? We could vote on this and get on with the important business of saving the taxpayers of Ontario, my constituents in the riding of Durham, hard-earned money. They want accountability, and I can tell you that this government, going forward—if you were to look clearly at the explanatory notes in the bill, you would know that this is about making sure.

I'm going to read the concluding part. It says, "No proceeding may be brought against the crown, Hydro One Inc, a subsidiary of Hydro One Inc or any other person relating to anything done by the act."

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I think it's the admission that the board had acted unilaterally and informed the minister quite late of these changes, the golden parachute provisions. The minister acted. We're calling on the opposition and the third party to quit delaying this. Let's get on with this and let's vote for it. I could say right now that I'm encouraged, from the little I've heard tonight from them, that they will be supporting this. If they don't, they clearly are going to be on the side of supporting this.

I do want to pay one last respect to my riding. In the budget today there's a comment made on my former employer, General Motors, as being the number one plant. There's a plant that, through competition, has continuously improved. They're number one in quality and number one in cost, and it's attributed right here in the budget. It was front-page news this week.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'm pleased to join the debate this evening on reviewing Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One Inc. and its officers; or, by another name, this government's

attempt to finally deal with bloated salaries and compensation packages at the executive level of Hydro One.

At the outset, I would like to respond somewhat to the member from Durham who says, "Listen, get on with this." The government put forward a bill in haste to deal with what was generally perceived to be a system gone out of control and an attempt to very rapidly bring it back in line with reality. Tonight is part of that particular process.

I would say to the member for Durham that when the government asked us, as was pointed out by my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, quickly to pass the bill without even seeing the bill—I would hope now as a result of debate there are number of things that can ameliorate this bill without question. It is deficient in a variety of areas. Although our party would support in principle this particular bill, I would hope the government will take the opportunity for some amendments that would strengthen the quality and the integrity of this particular bill. Be it for an afternoon or two, I think we'd be anxious to be supportive to make sure this bill goes through, but that it go through as strongly as possible.

It took this government long enough to figure out what was going on over there on Bay Street. Indeed, our leader, Dalton McGuinty, for several days over the course of several weeks continually asked the Minister of Energy and the Premier in the House when they knew about the nature of the packages, the salary levels and things of this nature. We asked when these packages had been amended, and of course now we know the answer to some of these because the information has certainly been shared with us. They tried to tell us, "Well, this was something that was up to the board," the same board that passed these outrageous salary and compensation packages. Of course now this bill is an attempt to provide somewhat of a rein on that, although it could be more specific, and that has been pointed out already by several members. My friend from Thunder Bay talked about that just a few moments ago.

When they said, "We'll leave that up to the board of directors," if that's not the fox in the chicken coop, I really don't know what is. The relationship between the government and this particular corporation, especially with the government as the sole shareholder at this particular point, obviously has been lax. The government has not been on the ball. I think the taxpayers of Ontario need to know the happenings over there on Bay Street and at Hydro One did not just happen over a course of a matter of weeks; they've been out of control actually for several years.

Where was the oversight back then and who was in charge? It looks to me like there really wasn't someone in charge.

Mr Murdoch: Remember Patti Starr?

Mr Patten: The members are pointing fingers.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Patten: The Conservative Party has been in power for 50 of the last 60 years. If we want to get down to

responsibilities, we'd certainly be prepared to look at that.

But even when the government admitted something had to be done, they still kept saying, "It really is the board's problem." You can't have it both ways. I think now the government has recognized this and has assumed some responsibility—for which I give you credit—for now getting on with making sure there is some accountability for this public company.

We know that is not the case in some areas, that it's not just the board. We know they did have some information. I recall listening to Sir Graham Day and Dona Harvey on the radio in the morning as I was working away in my office. They've said publicly that this government, the former minister and the former Premier were kept apprised of what was going on over there since the beginning of 1999. Here's what Dona Harvey, a former director, said: "The company provided that information to the ministry and there were regular briefings with the minister." She went on to say, "To my knowledge, there were no objections"—at that time—"from the minister."

The fiasco over the departure of the old board and the announcement of the new board could have been amusing if it had not been so serious. Of course, the resignation of the board rather than responding to the government's directive is astonishing. It's more astonishing when you see how this board was made up of good Tory friends of the government.

The *Globe and Mail* on June 10 described the situation: "For its part, the government acted with astonishing lethargy in responding to information on Hydro One's executive compensation regime that has been in public circulation since at least March."

This whole fiasco can be summed up by, "You can't fire me, I quit," because that's exactly what happened. The board took the position that they would remove themselves.

What worries me and a number of other people in this province is that yesterday this government brought down a budget which they said is balanced. It's balanced because there are supposed to be some unknown, mysterious revenues the government hopes will keep it balanced. Those revenues will probably come from what the government hopes may be part of the sale of this particular company. We're going to hold hearings on another Hydro bill so that the government can get input from the public, the stakeholders and the owners, and I hope that indeed the government really does listen.

But tonight we're dealing with Bill 80. When it finally dawned on the government something was wrong, that the board wasn't listening, they introduced this legislation. We had hoped they would get it right this time; we're not sure that it is totally. We don't see anywhere in this bill that both Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation would be subject to freedom of information, which has already been raised tonight. Why not? Why shouldn't Ontarians be allowed to get answers to questions about public companies? Why didn't they write greater legisla-

tive accountability into this bill, for example, access for our Provincial Auditor to review from time to time this completely public asset? Surely the government should understand after this embarrassment that accountability should be the cornerstone from here on in. Now they've named a new interim board. Why there isn't a formal review process for this board to follow I don't know.

There's another thing we need to consider here. This government has decided that the salaries and compensation were too high. Fine, we all agree on that. But what are they going to do about the compensation packages over at OPG? The minister says, "I give full support to Mr Osborne," the CEO at OPG. "I think he has done a good job." That's what the minister said. But watch out, Mr Osborne. If he starts thinking you're not doing a good job, he might just bring in another bill to review your salaries over there.

We've got this bill now that says it can remove the directors as of June 4, when they've already resigned of course, so that's a redundant aspect. The new board will have the authority to negotiate reductions in salaries. The government could have been stronger in this bill in order to provide that particular guidance.

Lastly, in case the people targeted in this bill don't like what is renegotiated, it doesn't matter, because the government has an immunity clause for claims against the government, Hydro One and Hydro One subsidiaries. Well, is that good news or is it not?

2120

We learned through yesterday's budget that if this government needs to change legislation they just bring in amendments—technical amendments. But how did we get to this point? In my view, this mess occurred due to a government that was not on the ball, a government that showed no common sense, a government that reacted only because of public outcry.

I want to close by reading from an article again from the *Globe and Mail*.

"Directors, however, say they cannot believe compensation is the only reason the government fired the board. For one thing, they note, Ontario's Conservative government has known all the salary details since Hydro One was spun out of Ontario Hydro three years ago.

"'There was no big deal. This was all reported to the government,' Mr Syron said. 'Jim Wilson, he was there through the whole thing. He got annual information circulars, they were presented to him. They showed the compensation package for all the top senior people.'

"'Although the board did not need Mr Wilson's approval—'"

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Questions or comments?

Mr Martin: I have to say at the outset that I agree with the member for Ottawa Centre when he makes the case—this is the craziest piece of public business I've seen in my almost 12 years here. But it may be an indication of more things to come, and he outlined a few of those in his comments.

He backed up his perception of this by quoting some of the heretofore friends of this government in terms of the media and their querying of just exactly what is going on here. What is the real issue at the bottom of all of this? Why is the government all of a sudden taking this kind of very drastic action against some of its own? There must be a problem that perhaps we're not at this point understanding quite fully but that the government is quite aware of.

It's becoming more and more obvious now that the plan of this government, the agenda of this government, which was to turn over as much as possible of what we do by way of the delivery of public goods to the private sector, is falling down around their ears. This whole concept of private sector discipline that was supposed to kick in whenever you turned over the operation of some department of government to the private sector is becoming, obviously, a very difficult problem. It's presenting in a way that I don't think even the government expected it would. So we see in the budget of yesterday some back-pedalling on some very basic tenets underlying almost everything this government heretofore felt was sacred.

Mrs McLeod: I appreciate my colleague's very clear identification of why this bill is before us: simply because this government was pushed to act, pushed to act yet again to bring about some change in its so-called electricity policy. We've had from this government electricity policy that has been in constant change because this government is simply running on the basis of sheer political necessity, changing from moment to moment.

This government started out this session with the full intent—I should say prior to this session—of privatizing Hydro One, of selling it off. Only the Premier found in the by-election he had to win in order to take a seat in the House that 67% of the people in his riding were opposed to the sale of Hydro One. So suddenly, the day before the by-election, there is a change in government policy—at least a sort of change.

Then we had a bill that came in that was giving the government permission to sell. In the meantime, the Hydro One board of directors—the board we're dealing with in this bill tonight—was under the very clear understanding, given to them by the government, that Hydro One was going to be sold. That's why they put in place these giant severance packages, so they would make sure they had covered themselves when Hydro One was turned over to new ownership. That's what all the furor is about, and it's exactly what this government was also prepared to ignore. That's why this bill is here, as my colleague has said: because the government was forced to act.

The member for Durham asked, "Why are we debating the bill? Why don't we just give it second and third reading?" We forced them to act, so of course we're going to support the bill. Why won't we give it second and third reading right away? We would have done that conditional on the future salaries for the board of directors and the executive of Hydro One being subject to

full public disclosure so that there could be public accountability brought in. The government, although they were forced to act on this particular board and these particular salaries, refused to have future salaries subject to full disclosure. That's why we're debating the bill tonight.

Mr Christopherson: The member for Ottawa Centre, as he often does, has nailed very precisely the key issue that's in front of us, and that was his focus on accountability. That really is what we're talking about here. We're talking about individuals appointed to boards by government on behalf of the government of the people. Therefore, they're being appointed on behalf of the people, and they are the ones who are ultimately accountable to this place for the conduct and actions within that organization. Let's remember that this bill doesn't solve the accountability problem. We've got exactly the same lack of credibility and accountability in Bill 80 as we had before.

My friend from Thunder Bay-Atikokan just posed the rhetorical question, "Why wouldn't we support this?" I can tell you why. It's because I don't think they have adequately dealt with the issue of accountability. The board appointed by the government sets the wages and benefits of the senior officers. That happened. It created a huge fiasco. Now there's a bill in front of us that's supposed to address that very problem, and what's the structure that's contained within Bill 80? A board appointed by this government that decides on what the benefits and wages are of the senior officers.

The one way you could make a huge difference is as Howard Hampton's private member's bill does, which lays out the fact that you can't have someone paid more than 10% of what someone else receives in Canada performing the same kind of duties. Now there's common sense.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments? Response, the member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr Patten: I would like to thank the members for Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay-Atikokan and Hamilton West for their responses and for adding their points to the debate tonight as well.

At the end of the day, I hope the government does listen to the points that are being made on this: that this bill goes partway to begin to address what essentially is a public accountability issue and, I suppose, an overseeing responsibility—it addresses it somewhat but not completely—regarding the role of government in terms of its public operations—and in this case they are still public; they have not been sold off, OPG and Hydro One—that they have some accountability through the government; and the access to information and, as I mentioned earlier, access for our Provincial Auditor to look at some of these operations.

If we want them to be as efficient as possible, as the government likes to say, to act in a more private-like manner—and today, of course, when we think of Enron and one thing and another, the credibility is not so high any more. The most efficient operations or more honest operations or those operations with the most integrity are not necessarily going to be those in the private sector. We have evidence that was presented here by a number of members that there are other public hydro operations in other provinces that do very well, thank you very much. I'm sure many private companies or CEOs or presidents would be extremely proud to show the kinds of profits, meaning resources, that they generate in order to give back to government services or to the budget of the government to serve people in a variety of other fashions.

I hope this government will listen and will take this to committee for some amendments to ameliorate this particular bill in the name of public accountability.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2129.

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**Assemblée législative
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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 19 June 2002

Mercredi 19 juin 2002

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Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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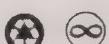
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 juin 2002

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Today I am asking this government to come forward with the regulations for the Nutrient Management Act. Let me be clear: Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party are in favour of a strong Nutrient Management Act but with regulations attached. We need these regulations now.

The farmers in my riding are worried. They are worried because they don't know what the regulations will be. They are also worried because every day the mega-hog farm operators from Quebec have their real estate agents offering big money for prime land to establish their mega-operations in Ontario as we have no regulations in place. Last week the Quebec government put a two-year freeze on all new construction and expansion of hog farms in their province because of their environmental problems.

I also learned this week that Quebec farmers are now trucking manure into eastern Ontario to spread on farmlands in my riding because the Quebec government has regulations and are not allowing them to spread manure on their farmlands due to the quantity of phosphorus that is generated by these mega-operations.

I say to the Minister of Agriculture: time is wasting. Where are the regulations? We need the regulations for the Nutrient Management Act before your government is forced to put a freeze on farming activities due to the polluted aquifers caused by the mega-farm industry.

AUTISM SERVICES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Children with autism and their families have been abandoned, but beyond abandoned, they now find themselves literally under attack by this government.

Cameron Walsh is six years old. At the age of three he was diagnosed with autism. Two years ago his parents put him on a waiting list down in Niagara for this government's much-touted, much-ballyhooed autism treatment program. Two years later, Cameron is nowhere near receiving treatment. His parents can't wait any longer and now, at a cost of \$2,800 a month, they've had

to retain private rehabilitative services for their son because this government failed them.

Curtis Moore was assessed with and fit the eligibility requirements for the early autism initiative in June 2001. He, along with 38 other kids, was placed on a waiting list in Niagara, where they languish while this government dithers over who will be served and who is more needy or deserving.

What is this government waiting for? These kids need treatment. They need it now. Autism is not something that can't be treated. It can be. Like any other medical condition, these children deserve and have a right to that treatment. This government has chosen to abandon those kids—Curtis, Cameron and so many others down in Niagara and thousands more across this province—while it balances its budget on the backs of the poorest and the sick.

UNITED EMPIRE LOYALISTS' DAY

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): Five years ago this government passed a bill proclaiming United Empire Loyalists' Day. Today, June 19, Loyalists' Day, we are once again given the chance to recognize the sacrifice and the contributions made by thousands of United Empire Loyalists who fled persecution south of the border to make their home in Canada.

Today my colleague from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, hosted a flag-raising ceremony outside the Legislature to mark this occasion. To Loyalist descendants who have travelled to Queen's Park, I want to say welcome and thank you for being here on this very special day.

I recently welcomed close to 100 proud descendants of United Empire Loyalists to Norfolk county during their national conference. Not only did the occasion give me a chance to recognize the legacy that patriotic Loyalists have left behind, but also an opportunity to reflect on my Loyalist heritage. Officially, I am UE through the Bowlby family on my mom's side, and, I might mention, my middle name is Butler.

To look across the Legislature today, we all benefit from the Loyalist vision that founded our province and our Dominion. The very motto of this province, "Loyal in the beginning, so remaining," is inscribed on our coat of arms and remains a constant reminder of Loyalist values. God save the Queen.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I, too, rise in recognition of

Loyalists' Day in the province of Ontario. This is an important day to all Ontarians. However, I happen to feel a special connection as I represent an area of eastern Ontario that owes much of its development to the Loyalist landing in Adolphustown, which is in my riding, that happened in 1784.

It is on this day that we recognize the contributions of the Loyalist settlers. The lives they lived and the beliefs they pursued were key to the founding principles of this province. They embraced ideas of courage, perseverance, freedom and loyalty. The theme of loyalty that is reflected in our provincial motto, "Loyal she began, loyal she remains," is a tribute to these Loyalist settlers. Their way of life greatly influenced the social climate and political structures of what was to become this great province as we know it today. Canada's proud tradition of a multicultural mosaic has its roots with the Loyalist settlers. The Loyalist spirit and beliefs are still alive and well in the people of this province.

Also, I am proud to claim that I am of Loyalist ancestry, as my forefathers and foremothers came to Lennox and Addington county from Connecticut. They were people with a spirit of perseverance, courage, commitment to freedom and dreams to create better lives for their families. Today we pay tribute to their faith and work ethic that contributed so significantly to the building of this great province.

1340

CANADA DAY IN CAMBRIDGE

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): More good news from Cambridge. Families in the riding of Cambridge celebrate our heritage with an outstanding display of national pride each Canada Day. The highlight of the festivities is the annual Canada Day parade, one of the largest in Canada. This year's event features marching bands from across Ontario and Cambridge's own Scout House Band. There are also many innovative floats contributed by the Shriners and Canadian Legion branches 121, 126 and 272, among others. This parade is a hallmark of our community and is enjoyed by thousands of children and adults.

I wish to acknowledge and congratulate the volunteer organizers, especially chairperson Kim Elvin and her dedicated committee, for their hard work. I would also like to thank the many volunteers and corporate sponsors such as Rockwell Automation. Ridgehill Ford and Ford Canada will be sponsoring an exciting Harvard airplane flyover.

This year's parade grand marshal is the Anne Dunne world champion women's senior curling team.

The Cambridge Canada Day parade will take place in the historic community of Hespeler along the heritage Speed River just north of the 401 on Highway 24.

I'd like to invite everyone in Ontario to join with us in Cambridge to celebrate Canada's birthday. The parade starts at 2 pm on Monday, July 1, and it promises to be a great day.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I rise today to tell the House about some real concerns that have been expressed by both parents and professional educators in my riding. They've raised some very valid issues with concern to school safety and the ability of our schools in Toronto to have effective safety measures.

In April, I circulated a survey in conjunction with our school trustee to all the principals and parent councils in Don Valley East. I asked them about the security measures that were in place in their school and what changes and improvements needed to be made. The results were quite clear. Schools are doing the best they can with the resources they've been given. They do their best to communicate safety plans to parents and students alike, but by no means are their plans or staffing abilities adequate, and they know who has to assist them.

Parents at Broadlands, Cassandra and Milne Valley want video surveillance cameras in their schools. Staff from Seneca Hill, Senator O'Connor, Lescon, Brian and Donview schools know that they don't have enough teachers, lunchroom supervisors, educational assistants and custodial staff to provide adequate supervision in their schools. Even simple requests for additional lighting in schools are not being fulfilled because of the same reason: the inadequate Ernie Eves school funding formula that is draining our schools' ability to respond to safety and security needs.

They also have real concerns about bullying in the schools. Reductions in the number of youth workers available to deal with students, the diminution of after-school clubs for youth and funding-formula-related cuts to ESL programming and vice-principals means a lessened ability of our schools to cope with student problems.

I have no idea why the Minister of Education will not immediately commit to implementing Dalton McGuinty's safe school plan. If the schools in Don Valley East are any indication, there is a clear desire by both parents and educators to take immediate steps. Teachers, students and parents alike can't be focused on learning if they don't feel safe. Minister, I will be sending you the results of this survey, and I know that the parents and educators are waiting for your answer. They—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up.

GEORGE MARCELLO

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I rise in the House today to recognize the tireless efforts of a very special individual, George Marcello. Seven years ago, George received a liver transplant that saved his life. George was grateful for the second chance at life, and grateful that he became a man on a mission to promote the importance of organ and tissue donations.

His mission began in 1997, when he walked from Toronto to Ottawa. The following year, he helped create the Step by Step Organ Transplant Association. In 1999,

George walked for awareness again, this time completing a 2,500-kilometre, liver-shaped route in Ontario in only 96 days.

This particular journey caught the attention of former Premier Mike Harris. In the throne speech of October 21, 1999, inspired by George Marcello, Harris pledged to double the organ donation rate in Ontario by 2005. A new Premier's Advisory Board on Organ Donation was also created. This board is headed by hockey's most colourful personality, Don Cherry.

In spite of the enormous amount of publicity he had already generated for his cause, George Marcello didn't stop walking. This time, he raised the bar to cover the entire country. In June 2000, George began a 769-day walk across Canada, starting in Toronto.

Earlier this month, on day 715 of the journey, George stopped in Orillia to visit with students in my riding. George was carrying the Olympic-style torch that became the symbol of hope, harmony and spirit for his important mission.

George will finish his cross-country trek on July 27 right here at Queen's Park, and I hope many people can join us. But his mission will no doubt continue.

On behalf of my caucus colleagues and the citizens of the province of Ontario, I congratulate and commend George for his unwavering dedication to educating Canadians about how organ and tissue donations can save our lives.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I was there. I was there the other day when, in a desperate attempt to cling to power just for the sake of having it, Ernie say-anything Eves eviscerated seven years' worth of message track in one fell swoop. No more "Just doing what we said we'd do," and the nauseatingly familiar "Tax cuts increase revenue" relegated to the dustbin of Ontario history.

Oh, what will Marilyn Mushinski say now? The retooling effort to reprogram the message tracks of the seal brigade is underway. Luckily, the BS-ometers of Ontario's voters are in better working condition than Ernie Eves's radar, which has him jumping all around like a Mexican jumping bean, trying to convince Ontarians that after years of initiating deadly, rapacious attacks on their beloved public services, he actually cares—that he actually cares about anything but a desperate attempt to cling to the perks of power, like golfing with the Tiger.

Don't take my word for it. In a rare moment of candour from these pathological politicos, they sent their lawyer to court this morning to argue before a judge that the courts should ignore the statements of Conservative ministers—ignore them because they will say anything. Exactly.

"The minister's statements are not indicative of legislative intent and should be given no weight." Exactly, like our first minister. Even their own lawyers know it: you can't trust Ernie Eves. He'll say anything.

DURHAM CENTRAL FAIR

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's on occasions like this, with students in the audience, that I'm often embarrassed by the performance on the other side.

I rise in the House to pay tribute to the Durham Central Agricultural Society on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Durham Central Fair. It's also known locally as the Orono Fair. This is one of the most successful fairs in all of Ontario because it's about agriculture and activities the whole family can enjoy. That is why attendance has continued to climb to well over 15,000 last year. Attractions include parades, livestock shows, commercial exhibitions, music, a demolition derby and performances by the Hell Drivers.

The Orono Fair belongs to the entire community. There are literally hundreds of volunteers I'd like to mention who contribute to its success each year. Many more participate as exhibitors and sponsors. The board of directors includes: president, Charlie Harris—no relation to Michael Harris—first vice-president, Larry Luxton; second vice-president, Donna Scott; past president, Brian Cascagnette; fair manager, Gord Robinson, who's also a local councillor; secretary-treasurer, Eileen Kennedy; and promotions and marketing manager, Darlene Brown, who does an excellent job. They are capably assisted by 25 directors.

In keeping with the 150th anniversary, there will be a historic display of photographs taken throughout the years of the fair, with memorabilia items such as ribbons, trophies and school projects. A commemorative painting by a well-known local artist, Eric Bowman, depicting the Durham Central Fair in the past and present will be a souvenir commissioned by the board on this occasion.

The Orono Fair is a long-standing tradition not only in heritage and agriculture but also in building strong communities.

This will happen September 5 to 8. I cordially invite all members of the House on both sides to attend the fair in September. I welcome the students to attend Durham Central Fair in Orono.

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VISITORS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know you and this chamber would want to be introduced to page Lindsey O'Brien's parents, Paul and Lori O'Brien, and her grandparents, Ross and Audrey Dodridge, sitting in our members' gallery.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to our Legislature a busload of 50 Kingstonians who have come all the way from Kingston to be with us in the Ontario Legislature. They are in the public gallery and the members' gallery.

On a further point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like this chamber to recognize the presence today of Joan

Fawcett, former member for Northumberland, in our gallery.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am sure you and all members of the assembly would like to know that we have with us today Chief Leo Friday from the community of Kasheshewan, along with Nabil Batrouny, one of the consultants working on their SuperBuild project. We look forward to meeting with the minister later on this afternoon.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to welcome young Martin from Dewson public school, and Christine from Palmerston, who have come here with their parents to visit and to learn from the proceedings to this Legislature. I welcome them.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the first report of the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): Pursuant to standing orders 59(a) and 60(a), I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on estimates on the estimates selected and not selected by the standing committee for consideration.

I am glad to inform the House that that important work begins next Tuesday.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to present its report as follows:

Pursuant to standing order 59, your committee has selected the estimates, 2002-03, of the following ministries and offices for consideration:

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Dispensed.

Pursuant to standing order 60(b), the report of the committee is deemed to be received, and the estimates of the ministries and offices named therein as not being selected for consideration by the committee are deemed to be concurred in.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr5, An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ELLIOTT ACT, 2002

Mr Arnott moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr9, An Act respecting The Elliott.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 86(a), this bill stands referred to the Commissioners of Estate Bills.

MEGA-HOG FARM CONTROL ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LE CONTRÔLE DES GROSSES EXPLOITATIONS PORCINES

Mr Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 110, An Act to control mega-hog farms / Projet de Loi 110, Loi visant à contrôler les grosses exploitations porcines.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): This bill deems mega-hog farms to be identified as industrial for purposes of the official plan of the municipality where the farm is located. The operation of a mega-hog farm is not a normal farm practice under the Farming and Food Production Protection Act.

These hog farms at the present time have created environmental problems, especially in Quebec. They have put a freeze on for two years until regulations are put in place, and this is what we have to do down here too.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (HELMETS), 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CASQUES)

Mr Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to make it an offence for any person to

use a skateboard, scooter, Rollerblades or roller skates on a highway without wearing a helmet. Parents and guardians of a person under the age of 16 are also guilty of an offence if they authorize and knowingly permit that person to contravene the restrictions. A police officer may require the person to identify themselves if the police officer finds that person contravening that restriction. The authority to make regulations to exempt persons from the requirement of wearing helmets is now repealed.

FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent on the motion I will be presenting, and I understand that Minister Runciman wishes to speak for five minutes following me and that the NDP will speak for five minutes following the minister.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Agreed? Agreed.

Mr Bartolucci: First of all, before I start, I want to thank the three House leaders for entering into negotiations and coming to the conclusion that this JOEMAC resolution was important enough to be brought forward in the House. So I want to thank Mr Stockwell, Mr Duncan and Mr Kormos.

I'd also like to thank Minister Runciman for his ongoing support of the MacDonald family, the Fragomeni family, for understanding the hurt of the community of Sudbury. I want to thank the third party as well for the expertise and the advice that they've offered over the last several months. And I want to thank Dalton McGuinty, who passed the first resolution dealing with the placement of Suzack and Pennett, and also my fellow caucus members for the amount of time and duty they do for me while I'm working on the JOEMAC committee.

The JOEMAC committee, as you know, was established in November 2001 to try to bring together all the groups who were outraged that the killers of Joe MacDonald—Peter Pennett and Clinton Suzack—would be moved from maximum security to medium security. There was an outrage in our community, an outrage that in fact spread quickly across this province and this country with regard to the policies used by Correctional Service of Canada. There was a need for a grassroots group to initiate a concerted lobby effort. We need and needed the help of a lot of people and a lot of groups. I immediately went to the Office for Victims of Crime. There I was met by Sharon Rosenfeldt, Scott Newark and Jim Stephenson, who are in the Speaker's gallery today. Sharon immediately said, "We are here to help the MacDonald family. We are here to help the JOEMAC committee." They assigned Detective Sergeant John Muise to the committee. John has been invaluable to us with his expertise and his knowledge.

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We needed support from other people as well, so we went to the Police Association of Ontario. They are represented in the Speaker's gallery today by Bruce

Miller, their administrator. Immediately Bob Baltin and Bruce Miller said that, yes, it was important we form a partnership, so the Police Association of Ontario is an equal partner on the JOEMAC committee. Every time we go around and speak to various groups in this province, we wear our Club Fed badges. We support the resolution of the Canadian Police Association and the Police Association of Ontario, their nationwide petition to make changes by the federal government. We want to thank them for their ongoing commitment to this cause.

A committee is only as good as the dedicated members who make it up, and today I am proud and pleased to have with me in this House Nancy MacDonald, Joe's wife, and Franco Fragomeni, Joe's brother-in-law, two key components of the JOEMAC committee because they bring with them the emotion and the expertise and the knowledge one can only get from suffering such a tragedy.

We met as a committee for the first time in November 2001. We mapped out a strategy. The short-term goal was to get a meeting with the Solicitor General of this country, Lawrence MacAulay, so that we could put our point of view forward. Our long-term goal was to effect systemic change in Canada so that the safety of the public would be paramount in the minds of those people who are elected federally when they make policy.

The JOEMAC committee decided we would first start with municipalities, so we went to the city of Greater Sudbury and asked them to pass the resolution that hopefully this House will pass today. From our city it went to the city of Sault Ste Marie, and then other cities in northern Ontario, finally ending up at the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, where it was passed. It will be presented to AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, hopefully be adopted there, and then next year at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, where we hope it will be adopted.

Secondly, JOEMAC felt it important that we bring our police services on board, so we went to the police services board of Sudbury and asked it to pass the resolution. It did, and then Sault Ste Marie did, Espanola did, and several other police services boards, and finally at the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards, they adopted the resolution supporting JOEMAC in its goals for change.

Then, with our partner the Police Association of Ontario, we went to the police forces across Ontario, seeking their support, and indeed we were met with only open arms and the determination and the dedication to support and to make change.

Today we launch what JOEMAC calls the JOEMAC National Drive for Justice. We will be presenting this motion to every Legislature in every province and territory in Canada over the next while. We want to ensure that across this country people understand the importance of having laws that protect public safety and the need to have a concerted voice speaking on behalf of ordinary Ontarians and Canadians.

So our intent is to have this motion passed today. We in Ontario will be the first province in Canada, hopefully,

to pass this. I am proud to be part of a Legislature that believes in the importance of public safety.

If federal solicitor Lawrence MacAulay won't listen to the voice of JOEMAC, if it won't listen to the voice of the Canadian Police Association, if it won't listen to the voices of the Police Association of Ontario and the Office for Victims of Crime, hopefully the federal Solicitor General will listen to the united voices of every province and territory in this country when we suggest, and move, that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario call upon the Solicitor General to undertake the following three directives as demanded by the JOEMAC committee during its February 18, 2002, meeting with Mr MacAulay:

"(1) Ensure the immediate return of Clinton Suzack and Peter Bennett to maximum security to serve the duration of their 25-year sentence for the first-degree murder of Constable Joe MacDonald.

"(2) Order an external review of Correctional Services of Canada in light of the compelling and irrefutable evidence that CSC continues to pursue a dangerous and illegal policy whereby prisoners are cascaded to lower security settings and ultimately freedom, based not on individual risk assessments but on meeting numerical targets or quotas.

"(3) Follow through with a commitment made in April 2000 before a federal justice committee whereby he denied the existence of the aforementioned policy and offered to confirm this in writing to the CSC commissioner, wardens and staff that the prisoners must not be cascaded to lower security settings and ultimately, freedom based on numerical quotas."

I thank this House for its support of this motion.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I want to thank the member for Sudbury for proposing this opportunity to speak about the work of the JOEMAC committee and thank him as well for his work on the committee.

Our government strongly supports the resolution put forward by the JOEMAC committee. Corrections Canada's decision to allow Joe's killers to serve their sentences in anything less than a maximum security prison, let alone a Club Fed setting, is a disservice to the memory of Joe MacDonald, his family and friends and thousands of other Canadians who are victims of violent crime. I especially appreciate this opportunity to speak today because in 1993 I was sitting over there. I was our party's critic for the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Correctional Services, and Joe MacDonald's murder became a significant issue in this Legislature. During that time I got to know Joe's widow, Nancy, quite well, and I became a close friend of her brother, Franco Fragomeni. I'm grateful that both have joined us here today.

Perhaps because of my relationship with the family, Joe's death became very much a personal matter for me and a driving force behind many of the initiatives I was able to bring forward when I became Solicitor General. I don't want to rehash all the circumstances leading up to

and surrounding Joe's murder, but I do want to say that if any good flowed from this tragedy, it was a series of changes that have markedly improved police officer and public safety in Ontario.

In August 1995, we authorized the use of hollow point ammunition by Ontario's police officers and we followed that with a complete revamping of the Ontario Board of Parole, making community safety a primary factor in a release decision. I have the great pleasure of appointing Joe's brother-in-law, Franco, as one of the first new members of the parole board. Today, Franco continues to serve the people of Ontario by helping the Office for Victims of Crime in its important work, helping crime victims throughout Ontario, and he's done an outstanding job.

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In an initiative that I am most proud of, an initiative that was motivated by a murder that left a young woman without her best friend and husband and two children without their dad, we established the public safety officer survivors' tuition fund, a fund that pays for post-secondary education for survivors of public safety officers killed in the line of duty.

In closing, in the presence of a very strong and courageous lady, a lady who has led the fight for victims' rights right across this country, as well as with her friends and family here today, I would like to announce that this morning the government of Ontario officially renamed the survivors' scholarship fund in honour of the man whose death was the catalyst for its creation. From this day forward, the fund will be known as the Constable Joe MacDonald scholarship fund.

God bless you, Nancy.

Applause.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): New Democrats, this caucus, are pleased to have been able to help ensure that this resolution came to the floor of this House today. First-degree murder is the most serious offence in our Criminal Code, in our criminal justice system. The Criminal Code dictates mandatory sentencing ranges—in this case, a minimum of 25 years before parole eligibility.

The reason that mandatory minimum is there is because there is a point at which, let's say, the interest in mere rehabilitation has to give way to the broader interest of public safety. New Democrats join others in this assembly in calling for as strong an assurance of public safety as our justice institutions are capable of providing. So I say to you that just as we joined in resolutions in the fall and winter of last year that called for the return of these offenders to maximum security facilities, we join with the members of this assembly in that same call again today.

We don't do it in the interest of obtaining vengeance; we do it in the interest of justice and the safety of the community. There is a point when the conduct of our fellow citizens—yes, it's our fellow citizens—become so indifferent to the safety of others, in this instance resulting in the tragic loss of a husband and a father and community member and a good police officer, that the

perpetrators of those types of crime have to be isolated in the interest of protecting other people from what they might do yet to others.

The tragic thing is that this is not an isolated instance. In this case we're dealing with two offenders and no, not just one victim, Constable Joe Macdonald, but his family and his colleagues in the police force and his community. All of them are victims. It's not isolated, and that makes it even more tragic.

I recently read Michael Harris's book *Con Game: The Truth about Canada's Prisons*. I commend it to you. It's consistent with everything I've ever read about the complete state of chaos in our federal prison system, and not just the lack of management by the federal government but an indifference by the federal Liberals to corrections and rehabilitation. It's a federal corrections system that no longer has corrections and rehabilitation, neither of those elements, as a part of it.

New Democrats understand, because when hard-working folks, whether they are from my communities or any of your communities, who struggle on a daily basis raising kids, trying to send kids to university and college and getting second mortgages while they are in their fifties, read the litany of press reports about the largesse and generosity of our federal corrections system to some of its most notorious and dangerous offenders, I say to you that people are outraged, and understandably so.

This is clearly federal jurisdiction. There may be many who criticize this Legislature for entering the field of federal jurisdiction, but it's clear that the federal government has no interest in addressing these issues and has been dragging its feet, notwithstanding the strong, aggressive and pressing efforts of the JOEMAC committee.

So we share the interest of the other members of this assembly in protecting people in our community and ensuring that justice is done and that offenders in the federal correctional system have placements that reflect their level of dangerousness, the severity of their crimes and the length of their sentences, and that those placements should not be altered or changed in any significant way until there has been a thorough and justifiable change in their assessment and in their status that would warrant their re-placement in another facet of the system.

As well, we call for restoration of corrections and rehabilitation into the federal corrections system. Similarly, we call upon the federal government to come to, if you will, and understand that there is a crisis in our prisons. It has been reported that it's the inmates running the corrections system federally. Every single bit of evidence points to that. We say that has to come to an end. We say there has to be a meaningful reform at the federal level by the federal Liberals of our federal corrections system to ensure safety and to ensure effective rehabilitation and correction of inmates.

The Speaker: Mr Bartolucci moves that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario call upon the Solicitor General to undertake the following three directives as demanded by the JOEMAC committee during its February 18, 2002, meeting with Mr MacAulay:

"(1) Ensure the immediate return of Clinton Suzack and Peter Pennett to maximum security to serve the duration of their 25-year sentence for the first-degree murder of Constable Joe MacDonald.

"(2) Order an external review of Correctional Services of Canada in light of the compelling and irrefutable evidence that CSC continues to pursue a dangerous and illegal policy whereby prisoners are cascaded to lower security settings and ultimately freedom, based not on individual risk assessment but on meeting numerical targets or quotas.

(3) Follow through with the commitment made in April 2000 before a federal justice committee whereby he denied the existence of the aforementioned policy and offered to confirm this in writing to the CSC commissioner, wardens and staff that the prisoners must not be cascaded to lower security settings and ultimately, freedom based on numerical quotas."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

ESTIMATES

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Mr Speaker, I rise today on a point of order with regard to standing order 58 that relates to the estimates that are supposed to be presented before the estimates committee. Standing order 58 requires that the government table its estimates on the next available sitting day following Victoria Day.

As you know, this year, because of the legislative calendar and because of the government bringing its budget in late, there was a motion passed in this House to deal with the budget at a later date. This year the House, by way of the motion, extended the deadline for tabling the estimates to June 17, 2002. According to standing orders 59 and 61, it's now incumbent upon the standing committee on estimates to consider the estimates of between six and 12 ministries and to report back to the House no later than the third Thursday in November.

Yesterday, the committee was informed by the government members that the complete package—and I repeat, the complete package—of supplementary information was not ready for the committee's consideration. In fact, they moved a motion and in discussion have said they would not be ready until July 2.

As my colleague from Niagara Centre would say, too bad, so sad. If you haven't got them ready, no excuse. You guys are the government. You're supposed to have them ready. The committee has a right to begin its consideration of estimates next week, and the ministries' unpreparedness in no way should prevent the committee from probing into the financial management of this government through the estimates committee. Otherwise, ministers could avoid the entire estimates process simply by instructing their staff not to be ready. Clearly this was not the intent of the financial procedures as outlined in our standing orders.

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Speaker, I would ask you to rule on the motion rammed through by government members of this committee yesterday at estimates. It states, in the way they did it, that the committee will begin its inquiries into the estimates of the Ministry of Health subject to the ministry's readiness. I put to you, Speaker, that such a motion infringes on my rights as a member of the estimates committee to fulfill my obligations under standing orders 58 and 61. I look for your guidance on that matter.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, this is not a new practice. It's a practice that's been long held, a tradition established—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, it's established, a tradition that has been practised for many years. The argument is, were the estimates tabled on time? The answer is, yes, the estimates were tabled on time. The briefing books often come after the estimates. Every government produces their estimates and then briefing books afterward.

I understand the member's concern. His concern is that since we postponed the tabling of the estimates, there would be some concern with respect to starting early. The fact is, that's why the agreement was made that provided up to 70 hours of estimates time to be heard. That was a unanimous consent, agreement, among this House: that there will be up to 70 hours of hearings before estimates.

Furthermore, it was this House that agreed that seven and a half hours would be provided per ministry. My only suggestion to the member opposite is, if you don't like what was agreed to, then you either should have said no at the time or you should have consulted with your House leader, the member for Niagara Centre. I can only assume he consulted with his caucus, as I'm sure the House leader for the Liberals consulted with his caucus and I consulted with my caucus. By unanimous consent, we passed that motion. There is nothing out of order. If, after the fact, you have a great deal of frustration with the decision, then I think you should take that up with your House leader rather than the Speaker.

Mr Bisson: I don't want to get into a debate, but the point is this: when that motion was brought to the House, it was with the understanding that the information would be ready to do estimates at the date we had provided. Now what we've got is a government that basically says, "It ain't ready. Oops. Too bad. Therefore, we're not going to deal with our estimates until July." Surprise, the House is not in session. We probably won't get any hearings during the summer and the government is able to get away with at least half of the time killed off of the 70 hours, which means many of the ministries will not have an opportunity to be scrutinized by the estimates committee. That's why, Mr Speaker, I'm asking for your help on this particular matter.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: just briefly, as the appointed Chair of estimates committee, I want to point out for the information of the government that our usual

practice is to receive detailed estimates within a week. A courtesy period is provided. Just to be clear, for the information of the House, that is a separate issue quite distinct from—I think there were some problems arising with the consent resolution in that we were advised at the committee that the ministries would not be able to provide us with the supplementary briefing notes, which standing order 64 instructs ministries to have available.

I just want to make sure there is a clear understanding. That is the issue the Management Board information put to us at committee yesterday and which is being brought forward to the House today.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the members for their comments. Standing order 64 does say that the committee on estimates shall be provided "with advanced briefing material which shall include" some information. That's standing order 64. I have no way of enforcing that.

I would hope it's through some circumstances, inadvertently, that this may not have happened this year. I will say this, though: what I have noticed in the past is that when it happens one year, it becomes historical and continues on. If this is an inadvertent circumstance, if there were some surrounding circumstances—ministers taking over late in the process—it may not have been done.

There isn't a point of order now, but I will be checking to make sure, if in fact it has been inadvertent, the government adheres to standing order 64 which does say that advanced briefing material will be provided to the committee. Hopefully this is a case this year where there were some unforeseen circumstances. I say very clearly to the government, I hope this will not become a precedent for that committee.

Mr Bisson: Mr Speaker, I just want to thank you for your assistance on this matter.

Hon Mr Stockwell: On a point of order, Speaker: I appreciate the fact that you read standing order 64, but may I add that if in history it had ever been done that way, where the briefing books were provided at the same time the estimates were tabled, I would say OK, that we would be breaking tradition. But quite candidly, and I say to the member opposite, the Chair of the estimates committee, there's usually a grace period between filing the estimates and providing the books. We haven't ever exceeded that week yet.

If there is an argument to be made, I'm sure Management Board is working very feverishly to meet the one week or eight days, but surely today there can be nothing out of order, is what I'm suggesting.

Mr Kennedy: On a point of order, Speaker: For the information of the House, all the members of the committee agreed with a letter that has gone to the Minister of Health asking for the co-operation exactly as articulated by the House leader, and we would look forward to that. We hope to hear by Friday, and to have that information, if it's possible, by Monday. We could proceed as scheduled on Tuesday.

The Speaker: The committee has done the right thing and we wish them well. The committee has forwarded that and has done the correct procedure.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUILDING CODE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CODE DU BÂTIMENT

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement / Projet de loi 124, Loi visant à améliorer la sécurité publique et à accroître l'efficacité dans l'exécution du code du bâtimen.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1426 to 1431.

The Speaker: Mr Hodgson has moved third reading of Bill 124. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Amott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Martinuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Eves, Ernie	McDonald, AL	Wilson, Jim
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Bartolucci, Rick	Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Bountrianni, Marie	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	Ruprecht, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Komos, Peter	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 53; the nays are 33.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday, the Premier presented me with a hat to eat. I just wanted to say I appreciate it. I deserved it. I want to acknowledge that I made a mistake. I've learned my lesson, and it won't happen again.

On Focus Ontario, I was asked, "Will they delay the tax cuts?" and I said, "No way. If they do, I'll eat my hat." The reason I said that was they said they wouldn't delay them. They passed legislation on it. There's actually a law that says they can't delay it. But I was wrong, and I deserved it yesterday, and I did eat my hat.

Just to let everybody know, I won't make the same mistake again. I'd urge all members on both sides of the Legislature to never say publicly that if the government doesn't do what it promises to do, you'll eat your hat, because you may find that Premier Eves will deliver a hat to you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. In your budget—a budget which is becoming affectionately known as the "I'll say anything to hang on to power" budget—you walked away from your fundamental commitments that you'd made, in particular, tax cuts and your Taxpayer Protection Act. In so doing, you walked away from your principles.

Your budget represents a dramatic departure from your six previous budgets. I think that makes it especially important that the Ontario public have an opportunity to comment on your budget. Will you agree to hold public hearings to give Ontarians an opportunity to comment on your budget?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The leader of the official opposition has obviously not been in the same place that the rest of the world has been since September 11. The events of September 11 have had a profound impact upon revenues in every jurisdiction in North America and indeed, most jurisdictions in the western world. Every jurisdiction has taken their own steps to deal with those problems.

The state of Michigan, for example, has gone from a surplus of about \$1 billion to \$3 billion to a deficit of \$1 billion to \$3 billion. I guess we could have run a deficit of \$1 billion to \$3 billion in the province of Ontario and responded the way they did, but we decided to defer our tax cuts for one year.

By the way, we did proceed with five tax cuts in the budget, as we had indicated, which cover 88% of the businesses in the province of Ontario, being the small business community. I assume the leader of the official opposition is at least in favour of that.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, use whatever convenient excuse you may settle on, but the fact is you have broken

your promises and you have decided to break your own law.

I asked you about public hearings. Let me quote you, sir, in 1991, when you were standing on this side of the House. You said, "Why is the opinion of the public of Ontario, which could be very easily heard on this budget through reference to a committee, with open public hearings, not important to the Premier of Ontario?" That was a question you yourself asked when you sat on this side of the House.

More recently in your throne speech, you said that listening was the hallmark of courage. I ask you the same question that you asked of Premier Bob Rae back in 1991: why is the opinion of the public of Ontario, which could be very easily heard on this budget through reference to committee, with open public hearings, not important to the Premier of Ontario?

Hon Mr Eves: Life must indeed be boring over there. They're digging up all kinds of quotes and reading them in their spare time.

I would say to the leader of the official opposition that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt just stood up on a point of order at the beginning of question period and good-naturedly, of course, talked about the Focus Ontario issue. He forgot to include, though, in his point of order another quote that he had in that interview, that "We"—meaning the Liberal Party I presume—"would like to see them defer the tax cuts." That is exactly what we did. He didn't say "cancel," he said "defer" the tax cuts. That is exactly what we did to meet the exigencies of the fiscal year resulting from the September 11 fallout.

1440

Now, the leader of the official opposition can pretend, if he wants, that September 11 didn't happen, that it didn't have an impact on the economy of Canada, that it didn't have an impact on the province of Ontario, on Manitoba, on Quebec, on all the other provinces, but the reality is that it did, and we made the best decisions we could to deal with—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The Premier's time is up. Final supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Now, Premier, to remind you one more time, before we come back to the question I keep asking you, your government said shortly after September 11 that it was important that we accelerate tax cuts, that we bring them forward. Now you're saying that September 11 means we have to delay them. You're going to have trouble reconciling that.

You told us back in 1991 that it was important that the government listen to you and hold public hearings on the matter of a budget. At least Minister Flaherty, during his last budget, held public hearings. At least we can say that much for this man, a man we greatly miss.

Premier, I ask you, if you said when you sat in opposition that we should hold public hearings, if you maintained through your throne speech that listening was the hallmark of courage, if at the time of your last budget you held public hearings, and given that this budget represents such a dramatic departure from your six

previous budgets, do you not agree that the best thing to do in the circumstances is to allow the Ontario public to have public hearings?

Hon Mr Eves: We did listen to the people of the province of Ontario. That's why we're spending \$1.7 billion more on health care this year than last, that's why we're spending \$557 million more on education than last and that's why we're spending \$500 million more on environment than last, because we listened to the people of the province of Ontario, who wanted us to do all those things and balance the books of the province at the same time. That's how we got to where we are today.

It's easy to snip from that side of the House. On this side of the House, you actually have responsibility and you actually have to be able to do something with that responsibility.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Education. The school boards have now come to understand fully the impact of your abandonment of public education. Here are some of the comments that have been coming in.

The director of education in Ottawa says the board is in critical condition and your budget simply won't help. In London, where they are facing an \$11-million shortfall, the education director says, "There's nothing"—in the budget—"that will allow us to go to the community and say, 'Hallelujah.'"

In Welland, the superintendent of financial services said, "Provincial funding for school boards doesn't realistically reflect the true costs of delivering quality elementary and secondary ... programs."

Tom Kilpatrick, chair of the Greater Essex County District School Board, says, "It's not anywhere near what we need."

Your budget continues to starve public education, but you remain very much committed, Madam Minister, to putting half a billion dollars into private schools. I ask you on behalf of Ontario students, why have you abandoned them?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): The level of funding for public school boards this year is the highest ever in the history of this province. We are committing \$14.2 billion. We have increased funding this year, as the Premier has just said, by \$557 million. That is a 2.9% increase at a time when enrolment is only growing by 0.4% and at a time when the economic growth was just 1%.

I would also encourage the Leader of the Opposition to take a look through the newspaper clippings today at the number of boards that have taken the time and made some very difficult decisions. But I'm pleased to say they have been able to balance their budgets.

Mr McGuinty: Your budget, Minister, abandons our children, especially kids who need special help.

Theresa MacNeil, the mother of a child with special needs, said, "The budget won't even touch our kids." D

Sandra Fisman, head of Western's psychiatry program, said, "More and more children will continue to fall through the cracks. These problems won't go away, and the prevalence of high school dropouts will become overwhelming."

I believe that our children need help now. That's why I put forward a plan. My plan calls for helping special-needs children now. It calls for ensuring that we're helping students who are struggling now. It calls for stopping school closures now.

I ask you again, Madam Minister, why have you abandoned our children, and why will you not adopt my plan, which will help our kids now?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our government has responded very quickly to the concerns of people in Ontario. In the last few weeks, the last couple of months, in response to the concerns we heard, we have provided, as I said before, an immediate injection of and additional \$557 million. This is a very significant amount of money at a time when in our province and throughout Canada and throughout the United States we have not seen economic growth. It is a very significant announcement.

As far as special education funding is concerned, we are presently spending about \$1.37 billion. That is a 17% increase since 1989 and that again is a very considerable amount of money. We have also set up the task force to take a look at the funding formula.

I don't think any other government has responded as quickly to the concerns that have been heard. We have listened, we are responding, and we have put more than half a billion dollars—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Final supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, you yourself don't even believe what you're saying. That is some tripe that you're trotting out there. When was the last time you visited any Ontario schools? They are in trouble. They are struggling. They are on their knees. They've got 39,000 kids waiting on a list for their first special education assessment. Our schools are short of textbooks. We've got deficits popping up around this province like mushrooms in the spring. I suggest that you get out of your limousine and begin to assume your responsibility, which is to take charge of public education.

I ask you, why is it that in this budget you did not stand up for public education? Why did you not say, "I will not tolerate putting half a billion dollars into private schools"?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The Leader of the Opposition doesn't even know what he's talking about. I haven't seen half a billion dollars invested in private schools. But I can tell you what David Peterson did with the school closures. You know what? David Peterson closed 37 schools between 1985 and 1990, and you're trying to pretend that school closures are a new issue? Give me a break.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Take a seat. I'm afraid it's too noisy. The minister had some time left, if she wishes. No? New question.

1450

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Premier. How many more women and children in this province have to die before your government takes significant action to combat domestic violence? Since Gillian Hadley's estranged husband gunned her down two years ago tomorrow, women's advocates have been urging your government to act. Now a juror and a neighbour who tried to save Gillian Hadley's life are telling you that your time is up. They want you to act on the jury's first recommendation: to create a community-based committee to implement the 57 remaining recommendations to help prevent more tragic deaths like Gillian Hadley's. So will you rise today and tell us that you're creating an implementation committee immediately?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I believe the Attorney General has a response to this question.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Let me be very clear. This government will not tolerate violence against women or children in this province. We want to help victims break free of domestic violence and we will do everything within our power to do so. We have a track record that demonstrates that we are serious. They are not mere words.

Over the last number of years we have implemented 145 programs over various ministries, spending in excess of \$40 million a year. In terms of the recommendations that the member opposite referenced, indeed we have already begun to implement those recommendations. I would remind her that the recommendation dealing with crown training is well advanced. The recommendation dealing with local domestic violence coordinating committees is well advanced. We take this very seriously and we will have more to say in the next short while.

Ms Churley: Minister, first you had the recommendations from the Arlene May inquest almost four years ago. Then you had the recommendations from the Hadley inquest. A committee without the mandate to implement all of the recommendations is useless. Furthermore, propping up initiatives in the criminal justice system is a narrow approach which is not reaching about 75% of the women who are in this situation. We need a community-based committee, as recommended in the very first recommendation, to get all those other recommendations up and running.

I am asking you again: will you, as a first step, announce today that you are setting up this community-based committee so that all of those recommendations can be implemented immediately?

Hon Mr Young: We are well advanced in the sense of the member opposite talking about first steps. Indeed, we're well beyond first steps. The member referenced the May-Iles inquest and the jury's recommendations that emanated from that proceeding. We've implemented in

excess of 90% of those recommendations, recommendations that include 24 domestic violence courts, the largest number as compared to any province in this country, the most comprehensive system in place. We have moved a considerable distance in relation to shelter beds, which was another recommendation. Indeed, there are 300 new shelter beds across this province, including the Durham area, which was the subject of the most recent coroner's inquest.

I would remind the member opposite that we had an announcement a number of months ago in which we put forward a program that is unlike any in this country that will provide a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year assaulted women's help line that will provide immediate assistance to women in excess of 140 languages. We are very proud of those programs.

Ms Churley: Minister, in the public gallery today sitting right here are John Wallace, the man who tried to save Gillian Hadley's life; Lorna Ruder, a member of the inquest jury; Eileen Morrow of OAITH; and Denise Brown from the Cross-Sectoral Violence Against Women Strategy Group. They say that you have not implemented most of the major recommendations before you. They say that murder of women and children by violent partners is both predictable and preventable. They say that the focus on propping up those initiatives in the criminal justice system isn't working. You have to do something about affordable housing, bring back second-stage housing, employment initiatives, child care and on and on. Those are the things that you are missing. These people, the experts, are here to tell you and you are still not listening. I will ask you again: will you announce today that you will set up this community-based committee so that those very important initiatives can be taken immediately to save women's lives?

Hon Mr Young: This government's hearts, minds and thoughts are with those individuals who find themselves in situations that may well result in domestic violence. I say to you that we must all resolve to do everything we can and, to the extent possible, leave aside the political rhetoric and leave aside the temptation the member opposite seems to have to try to make this a political football to be punted back and forth.

Indeed, we have done more than simply yell across the legislative floor. We have implemented dozens and dozens of programs and we are appreciative of the hard work that has come from the two juries she referenced earlier; as I indicated, in excess of 40 programs—\$145 million each and every year is being spent by this government and we are committed to doing more because there is always more to do.

Ms Churley: I'd say to the Attorney General that I'll be coming back at him again on that question. That was totally unsatisfactory.

HYDRO ONE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Premier. We were shocked to read media reports today that say you will sell Hydro One to a single

buyer this summer. It's obvious you're just waiting for the House to rise so you can sneak through your dirty deal while no one is looking. That means no debate in the Legislature and no way for the seven out of 10 Ontarians who oppose your foolish plan to voice an opinion before it is a done deal. So I'm asking you, will you confirm that you absolutely will not sell off a major chunk of Hydro One this summer?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I don't know if the honourable member was in question period yesterday, but both her leader and the leader of the official opposition asked questions about this issue. We indicated that we were not parting with control of Hydro One. We are not selling Hydro One. We did indicate that we will be seeking a private sector discipline to Hydro One, whether it's through strategic partnership or an income trust or an IPO or a NavCan model. We will not part with ultimate control, which will remain in the hands of the people of Ontario.

Ms Churley: Only giving off—what is it?—49%. You know I wasn't at question period yesterday, but I understood what you said yesterday better than you seem to understand it yourself. Premier, we were even more shocked to learn that you will let the private sector partner run Hydro One. In other words, you may have control on paper, but the private sector is still going to wag the dog. That means high executive salaries and perks and it means a strategy that puts power exports with more pollution and more smog ahead of the needs of Ontarians. Premier, will you confirm that you absolutely will not, under any circumstances, turn over management to the private sector?

Hon Mr Eves: We are going to do what is best for the people of the province of Ontario in terms of providing a future supply of electricity for many generations to come. We're going to do it in the most competitive, cost effective manner possible without parting with control of the assets of Hydro One.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition) My question is to the Minister of Health. The Lake of the Woods hospital in Kenora desperately wants to offer CT services to their patients. Right now, people in north western Ontario are forced to travel to Winnipeg or Thunder Bay to get a CT scan and the wait is now approaching 10 weeks and growing.

The hospital has raised the necessary capital dollars to make the purchase. They just need you to authorize the operating dollars to keep it running. Their proposal has been sitting on your desk for 16 months, with no response. We now hear, Minister, that you are looking to the private sector to improve access to MRIs and CTs for Ontario families. Do you not think, sir, that before you do that, you should be ensuring that our public hospitals are operating at full capacity? And why is it that you will not provide the operating dollars to the CT machine in Kenora?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the honourable member may know, we review the operating funding for each and every hospital in the province every year. They are required to submit an operating plan, which is in essence a business plan for each hospital.

That is the case for the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, and certainly from our perspective we are trying to make sure the Lake of the Woods District Hospital, like other hospitals in Ontario, operates in a fiscally responsible manner, because that is the way they can deliver excellent patient care. If the honourable member has any more information that could help us reach a satisfactory conclusion on this issue, then that would be helpful as well.

1500

Mr McGuinty: Do you know what I think, Minister? I think you have a private sector bias.

Let me give you some of the numbers we have received from the hospital. Your ministry is now spending \$470,000 to send patients to Manitoba for CT scans. Lake of the Woods District Hospital in Kenora is asking for only 250,000 operating dollars annually. So you would be saving considerable money by operating within the public system and providing the operating dollars to Lake of the Woods District Hospital in Kenora if you were to fund their CT scans.

I ask you again, why are you jumping so suddenly to the private sector when it comes to the delivery of better access to MRIs and CT scans if you have not first ensured that the public hospital system is operating at full capacity?

Hon Mr Clement: If I have any bias at all, it's a bias against having ideological blinkers, which means you're automatically against the private sector.

On this side of the House we're not automatically against—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Hon Mr Clement: On this side of the House we don't condemn the private sector and we don't try to automatically reject private sector alternatives. We try to work with the private sector to deliver more accountability and more accessibility for the citizens in Ontario. If the honourable member has a problem with that, he should state it in front of this House rather than using the words that he uses.

This is what the Ontario Hospital Association has been saying about the Ernie Eves budget: "The OHA is very pleased that Premier Eves has delivered on his government's commitment to protect patient care services. Today's budget announcement of about \$700 million in additional hospital operating funding, representing a 7.7% increase ... is a significant step forward in meeting patient care needs across Ontario."

That's the response of the hospital sector. We are working with the hospital sector; we are working with the private sector. We'll work with anyone who can deliver better health care for Ontarians, and we are proud of that on this side of the House.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): My question is for the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. As the member for Cambridge, I understand the importance of automobile manufacturing, not only to Ontario's economy, but also, as a whole, to Cambridge's economy.

Cambridge is the home of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Corp, which employs over 3,000 Ontarians. Not only are the Solara, Matrix and Corolla made in Cambridge; Toyota recently announced that their new Lexus SUV will be made in Cambridge. This is great news not only for Cambridge but for Ontario, as it marks the very first time a Lexus has ever been made outside Japan.

Minister, I know you are aware of how important the auto industry is to our province, which is why you hosted an automobile round table with industry experts in May. I would like to know what you have done since the round table to help ensure this industry remains a strong part of Ontario's economy.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): What a great question from the member for Cambridge, a terrific question. Just over two weeks ago I had the pleasure of meeting with the North American president of Toyota, Mr Tag Taguchi. He expressed to me how Toyota was proud to have chosen Ontario and Cambridge as the home for the first ever Lexus to be built outside of Japan.

The auto sector is vitally important to the economy of Ontario. It employs more than 130,000 people in the province. There are challenges globally. It is a globally competitive industry. There is some overcapacity in terms of production. For those reasons, we are developing an automotive strategy for Ontario in co-operation with my federal colleague.

Interjection: Who?

Hon Mr Flaherty: It's Allan Rock, actually.

We had a round table on May 22 in Toronto, to be followed by another round table hosted by the federal government next week in either Hamilton or Toronto. I have also met with the CEOs of the large assemblers and some of the parts companies as well and, of course, with Buzz Hargrove—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Mr Martiniuk: Thank you for that response, Minister. I'm pleased to hear about your meetings with these industry leaders, particularly Toyota. The importance of Toyota's continued investment in Ontario and in Cambridge cannot be overstated.

I would like to know what steps our government is taking to help ensure the strength of the automobile industry.

Hon Mr Flaherty: We're taking steps to develop our automotive strategy. The report is being released with respect to the round table. We're developing an Ontario automotive innovation group to report back on the innovation challenges the industry faces and to recommend

ways to address those challenges. We're also establishing an Ontario automotive skills working group to identify training and skills challenges that Ontario faces and to present proposals in that regard.

As I say, I'm working with my federal colleague. All of the science, technology and innovation ministers from across Canada will be meeting in the next two days in Vancouver. I'll be bringing to their attention our developments and the steps we're taking in Ontario as we move forward to the federal round table next week in Ontario.

PRIMARY CARE REFORM

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health. While nearly one million Ontarians are without a family doctor, we hear that you continue to drag your feet on primary health care reform. I just want to go over the history of this matter and your government.

In 1996, then-Minister of Health Jim Wilson announced, "1996 will be the year we move ahead on primary care reform." In 1998, Minister Liz Witmer announced primary care pilot sites. In 2001, Minister Tony Clement said, "You're going to see this thing come out of the starting gate like a coiled spring." The commitment was that we were going to have 80% of family doctors signed up on to a health network by 2004. Now we hear that you have abandoned that target and that goal entirely.

Can you tell us now—we've had three statements from past ministers, including yourself—what is the new goal, and how much longer must Ontario families wait until they can join primary care reform?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'd be happy to report to this House that Ontario leads the country in primary care reform. We are proud of that. We are proud of the fact that we are opening family health networks. We opened one in Oakville. We're opening one in Guelph. There is a lot of interest. There have been 600 interviews and discussions with 600 different family practitioners by Dr Ruth Wilson, who is the head of the Ontario Family Health Network. We are on track. We are excited by the prospect of a new beginning for family practice in Ontario.

We are leading Canada, incidentally, without a single penny of federal health care dollars. So if the honourable member wants to be productive, phone Anne McLellan, phone Jean Chrétien. Get some action from the feds, and maybe we can work together for a change.

1510

Mr McGuinty: Minister, the only thing you forgot to mention is that this thing is going to come out of the gate like a coiled spring. You got everything else out, but you forgot that part.

Your model that you have chosen for primary care reform is not working. Only 2% of Ontario's family doctors have signed on. I have proposed an alternative. It is driven by communities; it is not bound by ideology. I

say to you, Minister, why don't you keep your model, continue to work with that, but add to it my model? It is community-driven. There are more than 50 communities that have said they would embrace that kind of a model. It's the kind of a model where communities go out and set up the operations, essentially for doctors to join. Doctors are too busy to sign on to your model. So I'm asking you, given that your model is not working, with a success rate of only 2%, given that you've had to abandon your target once again, why will you not at least consider our model that we put forward?

Hon Mr Clement: Your model is about funding community health centres, which we do. Your model, and I quote the Liberal Party on this, is that "Family health teams including doctors, nurses and other professionals will work together to provide care, support, advice to patients and their families around the clock." Sound familiar? That's what we're doing. That's exactly what we're doing. Congratulations, Dalton; you caught up to where we've been for the last few years. Work with us, work with the federal counterparts, get us the money that we are owed from the federal government. Then you'll be doing something constructive. Until then, it's just a bunch of hot air.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Today, my question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, for 10 lost years, between 1985 and 1995, when the Liberals and the NDP governments terrorized Ontario taxpayers, not one long-term-care bed was built in this province. I know that our government is committed to invest in the development of 20,000 new long-term-care beds, and I know that many of my constituents are particularly interested in an update on the progress of these beds. Minister, for the benefit of those constituents in Scarborough Centre, could the Associate Minister of Health please provide this House with an update on the development of the 20,000 beds?

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the very hard-working member from Scarborough Centre for her question.

In fact, since 1995, long-term-care facility funding has increased by more than \$770 million. Our multi-year, \$1.2-billion plan to improve and to expand long-term-care services includes 20,000 new long-term-care beds being added to the system. More than 5,000 of these beds have been built and more than 7,500 beds are currently being tendered or are under construction.

Our commitment to invest in the development of 20,000 new long-term-care beds is in stark contrast to the records of both the provincial NDP and provincial Liberal governments. Indeed, our investment in these new beds will ensure that the health and well-being of Ontarians is not compromised by the inaction of the years between 1988 and 1995, when both the Liberals and NDP failed to build even one single new long-term-care bed in the province.

We've been working very hard to improve access in a sustainable way for the people of Ontario, no matter where they live, no matter where they call home.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you for that response, Minister. I know that you've been very busy ensuring that the commitment is met, and I'd certainly be interested in telling him about some of the recent health announcements that my constituents are interested in. We've come a long way, and I'm very proud to be a part of an Ernie Eves government that responds to the needs of Ontarians. This year's budget marks another unprecedented year for investments in health care.

Minister, on Monday, the Honourable Janet Ecker announced that we are increasing health care spending by \$1.7 billion. This represents a 7.3% increase over last year. I know that the Liberals don't like to hear that. We are increasing hospital funding by 7.7% to \$9.4 billion, something else the Liberals don't like to hear. That allows for expansion of priority programs such as cardiac services, dialysis, and MRI scans. We're increasing funding for building and renovations to health facilities by approximately 70%.

Minister, amid all of these—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the member's time is up. Minister?

Hon Mr Newman: I thank the member for Scarborough Centre for the question. I note too that the member for Scarborough East is also supportive of the recent health care investments within the region. Scarborough is a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family.

On Thursday, June 13, I was pleased to announce a capital grant of \$2.3 million for Providence Centre on St Clair Avenue East that will assist with the hospital's renovation and equipment costs.

Further, on June 6, I was joined by the member for Scarborough East and had the privilege of announcing that the Ernie Eves government is providing more than \$10.3 million in funding to Rouge Valley Centenary. The money will assist Centenary in upgrading its neonatal intensive care unit, as well as in the redevelopment of the hospital's maternal newborn unit.

On May 30, I had the pleasure of taking part in the grand opening of the West Park Health Centre in northwestern Toronto, which is a new 200-bed, long-term-care facility.

We've been working hard to improve access in a sustainable way for the people of Ontario no matter where they live, no matter where they call home.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): My question is to the Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, the member from Don Valley West. Minister, you've been complaining lately that in your 12 years here you've suffered two pay cuts that haven't been reinstated and that you've had your pension plan taken away. You

and some of your colleagues are calling for a return of the gold-plated, or rather sterling-plated, pension plan.

My question is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I'll let the member continue. Let's see what the question is.

Mr Kormos: My question is, since you obviously have such a highly developed sense of justice, will you, as Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, also be calling for an increase to the minimum wage to help those people whose wages have been frozen at the bottom of the pay scale for the last seven years?

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): I'll refer this to the Minister of Finance.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): In 1995 all of my colleagues, as candidates, stood on a platform with Mike Harris and said that the gold-plated pension plan for MPPs should be scrapped. We have scrapped it. It is staying scrapped.

Mr Kormos: Minister, I'm sure that came as a shocking surprise to you this morning during the cabinet meeting.

You're also quoted—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Let's come to order, please. The member for Niagara Centre has the floor.

Mr Kormos: Minister, you're also quoted in the paper as having whined and moaned—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Will the member take his seat. The member for Windsor-St Clair, come to order, please. Otherwise you'll get a warning. Sorry again, to the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr Kormos: Associate Minister, you're also referred to in the paper as whining and moaning about the wage reduction that you took to become an elected member and the vagaries of political life. It's clear to all of us you fear for your future financial stability. That's ironic, given your portfolio of enterprise, opportunity and innovation.

Look, since we're still trying to figure out what enterprise, opportunity and innovation really means, perhaps I can make a suggestion. I suggest you try to figure out how to support the most vulnerable workers in this province and stop worrying about how you're going to get by when you retire.

Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, will you promise today to recommend to your cabinet colleagues that the opportunities of our lowest-paid workers would be improved by increasing the now-seven-year-frozen minimum wage in Ontario?

The Speaker: Minister of Finance?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, I'd like to say that Minister Turnbull is worth every cent and more that he is paid by the taxpayers. He gives them service in his riding that they deserve, an excellent member.

Second, the honourable member is talking about the minimum wage. Well, 600,000 modest-income Ontarians

have received a pay increase in their take-home pay because of this government's tax cuts—tax cuts for modest-income Ontarians that are in this budget. That is how we believe modest-income Ontarians—they get the money to keep. They don't need the government in their pocket. We have delivered on that commitment.

1520

HOME CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Your government, through your health care restructuring program, closed hospitals and reduced a lot of beds. You made a solemn promise and commitment to the people of Ontario at that time that you would take the money that was saved from these closures and put it into community care. We all know that didn't happen.

In this year's budget and estimates there's absolutely no additional new funding for community care, for the nursing services and the home care services that many of our elderly and vulnerable need so badly in this province. As a matter of fact, over the years many individuals have been cut off: 3,500 people in Hamilton alone; hundreds in eastern Ontario and in my community of Kingston.

Why are you continuing to break the promise that you solemnly gave when health care restructuring took place and you closed all of those hospital beds by not putting the money you saved from that into home care and nursing care so that the frail and elderly could be looked after in their own home environments, which is the best possible way for them?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The honourable member is mistaken. We have made a commitment through two governments now, the Mike Harris government and the Ernie Eves government, to increase community care funding, to increase home care funding. Home care funding as of last year had increased by over 70%. The funding for long-term care and community care services is increased in this budget.

In the meantime, through Minister Johns's efforts last year and earlier this year, we ensured that we had a structure in place for community care access that was accountable, that made sure the money was focused in on the individual recipients rather than on governance or administration.

So that's the commitment on this side of the House. Of course, community care is an integral part of our health care system. Of course, we understand that it is important to have as much care as close to home as possible rather than in an institutionalized setting. The honourable member is mistaken. We are fully committed to that.

Mr Gerretsen: I'm talking about new additional funding. What you have committed to is a 1.6% increase, a total of \$22 million in a budget of \$1.4 billion. This is absolutely not enough, and it goes back to a commitment that you made in 1998, on which you still owe \$275

million to the community care access centres in this province.

We all know that seniors who live at home, in their own home environments, are saving not only their own health but also the health care system. It would cost a lot more money if they were involved in a hospital or lived in a long-term-care facility. Will you not at least commit today that you will increase the funding of community care by the same percentage that you're giving to the hospitals in this province, namely 7%?

Hon Mr Clement: In the first part of the question the honourable member says we've cut back and in the second part of the question he admits that we have actually increased the budget. That's Liberal math for you. But the fact of the matter is that we have increased the budget. We have increased our commitment to home care. We have increased our commitment to long-term care. We've increased our commitment to hospital care. That is the commitment of the Ernie Eves government.

If the honourable member really wants to be helpful, I will inform the honourable member that despite the promises of the federal Liberal government, there has been zero cents for community care. If community care is so important to Liberals, why are they spending zero cents on the dollar when it comes to community care? That's the true tragedy. That's the true crime.

If the honourable member wants to be helpful, phone Peter Milliken up and get a straight answer from him.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the hard-working minister from London, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. On Monday, the finance minister delivered our government's fourth consecutive balanced budget. This budget is good news for Ontario. It demonstrates our government is keeping its promise of growth and prosperity for Ontarians. In the face of real challenges, the Ernie Eves government has made fiscally responsible decisions for Ontario. We have invested in the priority programs that matter most to Ontario families: health care, education and a clean and safe environment.

Following Monday's budget, Minister, can you stand in your place and give us an update on our government's support for Ontario's colleges and universities?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): Thank you, to my friend from Perth-Middlesex. The great news is that there will be a place for every qualified and motivated student in our post-secondary system. We have had a plan, and I will tell you that we're in the third year of a five-year plan. I hope that next September we will have completed it a year in advance. I'm talking about the buildings and the operating dollars: a \$75-million commitment to colleges and universities, going up to \$368 million by 2003-04. Our colleges in fact do benefit not only from a \$5-million increase in operating, but from a \$50-million fund to

renew and update equipment in the colleges needed for the kinds of learning resources our young people are demanding and that they deserve. So this is \$10 million more next year. Another \$16 million—very important, as we listen to our colleges and universities in rural Ontario and northern Ontario. We have \$10 million going to our colleges and \$6 million to our universities.

Mr Johnson: Thank you, Minister. My next question concerns skills training. Skills development in this province drives the economy and helps keep Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family in Canada. Indeed, you'll remember not so long ago the meeting you had with two very effective and dedicated teachers at Stratford Northwestern Secondary School, Rob Collins and Mark Roth. The 2002 budget was clearly good news for Ontario's colleges and universities, but I was wondering if you could tell me of our government's support for apprenticeship and skills training following Monday's announcement.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: If anyone here in this Legislative Assembly has had a chance to go to Stratford Northwestern Secondary School, they would have seen teachers and a community dedicated to the skills training of their students and apprenticeship training. It's something I know the member for Perth-Middlesex is very proud of, and so are we.

In the budget, I will say that we again have committed money for upgrading the equipment and learning resources at our publicly funded colleges of applied arts and technology by \$50 million over the next five years. This is very good news for people who are interested in having a skilled workforce so that we can remain competitive in Canada and in the world.

The budget also committed \$25 million, just beginning over the next three years, in the base of our colleges—most of it, I would say about 90% of it—to increase the annual support to expand our apprenticeship training. Our commitment is to double the number of apprentices in Ontario.

CABINET OFFICE FUNDING

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is to the Premier. According to the government's own numbers, Cabinet Office costs are still on the rise. For the record, Cabinet Office is the central agency that supports the Premier and the cabinet. The Premier prides himself on the drastic cuts that he made in his former capacity as finance minister. It was under his watch that thousands of nurses were fired and hundreds of schools were shut down. People on disability have not had an increase for years. The mantra is that everyone must do more with less. I've tracked the cost of Cabinet Offices from 1995 and they have increased by about 119%. How does the Premier justify this drastic increase of Cabinet Office from \$7,800,000 to today at \$17,200,000?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I refer the question to the Chair of Management Board.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): According to the estimates filed—I look at the 2001-02 estimates—they indicate \$17,565,700; the 2002-03 estimates indicate \$17,252,000, which indicates a negative change of \$313,700. That's my answer.

Ms Di Cocco: The increase is still 119% since 1995. This dramatic increase shows the double standard here. There's less money for people with disabilities, there are inadequate funds for long-term care, programs being cut, schools closed, but not for the Premier and his cabinet.

What should be an embarrassment to this government is that although the number of members in the Legislature has been reduced in 1999, the cost of cabinet offices has increased substantially. I still don't have an explanation of why we have a 119% increase since this government came into office.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Again, my answer will be arithmetical. In my world, \$17,252,000 is less than \$17,565,700. In fact, to reduce that to a percentage, it is a 1.79% decrease.

1530

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Despite all the protestations from the special interest groups out there, the closet industry that profits from the doom and gloom message about housing in this city, particularly many city of Toronto councillors, media reports recently confirmed there has been a dramatic increase in vacancy rates in Toronto, from 0.9% to 2%. This is up from a low of 0.6% last year.

Can you tell the Legislature what programs your ministry has put in effect to help encourage the development of rental housing?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I know this is an issue the member from Scarborough cares deeply about; it's an issue that affects his residents. I'm pleased to see the numbers are getting better. According to his statistics and those of the Fair Rental Policy Organization, when it surveyed its members, the vacancy rate has climbed from a low of 0.6% to 2%. This recent data shows the policies implemented by this government are working. More vacancies on the market will lead to more competition and more families and people finding homes.

Mr Gilchrist: I appreciate the answer from the minister.

Interjections.

Mr Gilchrist: I heard some heckling from the other side asking, "Which councillors?" We don't want to go down that road, because we know many of the members opposite and many of the city councillors are actively standing in the way of our development of more housing, particularly hostel housing, in certain parts of the city not too far from this building.

I think we can all agree that an improved business and tax climate for the rental housing industry will encourage further construction of new rental housing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Hamilton East, come to order.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): What do you do, Stockwell? Dick.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale will please withdraw that.

Mr Smitherman: Yes, Mr Speaker, I will.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Settle down. I don't need any help from the minister sitting there. I will handle this. You're not very helpful when you do that. I would ask you to please refrain from doing it.

The member will stand and withdraw it.

Mr Smitherman: I do, Mr Speaker. I apologize for that.

The Speaker: We were halfway through your wrap-up, with about 10 seconds left.

Mr Gilchrist: My question to the minister specifically is, what has this government done to improve the business and tax climate for affordable housing, and what can other levels of government do to assist as well?

Interjections.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I know there's a lot of noise in here, and I hope I got the whole question. It seems to me the Liberals are disappointed that there are more vacancies available. Vacancies mean there's more choice and that landlords have to be competitive.

There are a couple of reasons for that. First, interest rates are lower. Second, there have been a lot of initiatives taken by this government to remove barriers to home ownership—I know the Liberals are against home ownership. We've increased home ownership by 100% since we've taken power with the housing starts that have started. In 1995 there were 35,800 new homes under construction. Last year there were 73,282. This means the private sector is building homes and people are buying those homes, which is good news for the province.

The member from Scarborough was asking about what this government has done. There have been a number of initiatives. I just want to tell you: \$6 million in government lands, \$123 million—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up. New question. The member for—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Thank you very much. The people at the desk keep track of it. I appreciate that you all have your own little clocks. I gave him some time to go on. His time is up. Stop the clock. I thank all the members. The people at the table keep the clock, not me. They're the ones who do it. That's why they're correct. Quite frankly, I trust the people at the table rather than the cabinet minister sitting there when it comes to the clock.

PRIVATE CLINICS

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Health. The budget opens the door for for-profit expansion of health care services. As I said yesterday, New Democrats are opposed to that because we believe that does come at the expense of patient care.

Today we learned that Wellbeing Inc, the largest for-profit MRI body scan chain, is opening up a shop in Toronto next year. The chain expects to cater to the healthy and wealthy from Europe, the US and Canada, anyone who is prepared to pay US\$1,000 for a scan. As the president said, and I'm quoting, "We're looking for you to swipe your AMEX card and take preventive, proactive control of your personal health."

Minister, is Wellbeing Inc in line to operate a for-profit MRI screening clinic as part of your government's private sector solution to deal with waiting lists?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I read the same news article you did, and all I can tell you is that they may think they're opening up a clinic. They have, to my knowledge, not applied for that. They would have to go through an application process. Frankly, the budget was quite clear that the emphasis for the new public-private partnerships to increase accessibility for diagnostic services is going to be in the underserviced areas to start with and not to the over-serviced areas. So unless University and College is automatically an underserviced area that I'm not aware of, I suppose there would have to be some reconsideration by that company. But I can tell the honourable member that I certainly have not heard from them, nor have they got approval to do so.

PETITIONS

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I'm very pleased today to present yet another petition from the upper Ottawa Valley. I particularly want to pay tribute to Marilyn Hagen of Deep River and Alice Clark of Cobden for gathering this petition of over 1,000 names. The petition reads in part:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralizing children's heart surgery services in Toronto will force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the Ontario government's decision to close this life-saving program and ensure that top-quality accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

I'm very pleased to sign and endorse this petition as I present it to you.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I have a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

"Whereas the citizens of Ontario are alarmed and disappointed with the 'golden parachute' severance packages available to senior executives at Hydro One; and

"Whereas the top five executives at Hydro One are not only making large salaries"—it should really be "were"—"but also have been given packages that would provide more than \$12 million if they leave, even of their own accord; and

"Whereas the citizens of Ontario consider this compensation to be clearly excessive;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Parliament of Ontario instruct the board and senior management of Hydro One to roll back the salaries and severance packages, with the goal of ensuring remuneration is in keeping with expectations of the citizens of Ontario, and

"Further, that the Parliament of Ontario take" the necessary "action to dismiss members of the board and/or senior management if they refuse to reduce the pay and severance packages for Hydro's top executives."

I'm pleased to sign, endorse, and to support the Minister of Energy. I'm asking the opposition to do the same, because there's already legislation to achieve this.

1540

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the auto industry accounts for approximately 50% of Ontario exports to the United States, supports another three or more jobs elsewhere in the economy and contributes billions of dollars in tax revenues to governments; and

"Whereas the auto industry is the economic lifeblood of communities, such as St Catharines, Oshawa, St Thomas, Alliston, Windsor, Oakville, Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo; and

"Whereas the auto industry has experienced job losses and seen challenges due to competition from industries in Mexico, the recent recession in the United States and delivery problems at Ontario's borders; and

"Whereas the prosperity of the province of Ontario is dependent in large part on an auto industry that is competitive and dynamic; and

"Whereas select committees of the Legislature tend to be task-oriented and non-partisan in their deliberations;

"Be it resolved that the Ernie Eves government convene a select committee on the auto industry that consults with labour, business and the public in a timely fashion to address the challenges and opportunities that the engine of Ontario's economy will be facing in the future."

I affix my signature. I am in complete agreement with the establishment of a select committee on the auto industry.

HOME CARE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I am receiving a lot of petitions, and I appreciate that, from my constituents in the riding of Durham.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, support the philosophy of caring for the elderly, the handicapped and the infirm within their homes and communities wherever possible; and

"Whereas caregiving by paid professionals in the home is not always the preferred choice of family members; and

"Whereas we believe in some circumstances it is more reasonable and compassionate for the government to use the money assigned to professional caregivers to support those family members who would prefer to remain at home to care for their relatives and family members; and

"Whereas caregivers who work outside the home often carry an extra burden of guilt and anxiety when they leave their loved ones in the care of strangers while they go out to work;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide financial support to those residents of Ontario who choose to remain with their loved ones and care for them at home. And we respectfully ask that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and other relevant ministries give full consideration to developing legislation and policies to provide caregivers who care for their relatives in their homes full support."

I am in full support of this petition and I call on other members of this Legislature to sign and support this petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending, but has already cut at least \$1 billion from our schools and is now closing many classrooms completely; and

"Whereas international language weekend classes are a needed part of learning for many students in our neighbourhood; and

"Whereas the Education Act, specifically regulation 285(5), mandates provision of these programs where demand exists; and

"Whereas the Conservative government funding formula is forcing the Toronto District School Board to cancel these Saturday classes for groups who want this programming;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to instruct the Minister of Education to restore meaningful and flexible funding to the Toronto District School Board, to ensure that they are able to continue to accommodate these Saturday international languages classes."

I have affixed my signature to this petition because I agree with it.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Centre Hastings are facing an immediate and critical situation in accessing physician services; and

"Whereas a retiring family physician has been unsuccessful in procuring a replacement physician, potentially leaving 5,000 patients without a doctor; and

"Whereas accessibility to already overcrowded hospital emergency departments and walk-in clinics is limited because of distance and availability to transportation; and

"Whereas Centre Hastings has been designated as an underserviced area in need of five physicians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act immediately to establish a community health centre in Centre Hastings."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the federal government has given a yearly increase in disability pensions geared to inflation, and the Ontario government, through the disability support program, has clawed this amount back;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned people of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to remove the cap on the disability support program."

This is signed by a significant number of my constituents and I affix my signature in agreement with their concerns.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): It appears that we must continue to read petitions to stop the sale of Hydro One, in that the province now plans to sell off just half of it.

"To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

I'll pass it off to Sean.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): My colleague David Caplan and I have many petitions coming through, and I'll read it as it says here, "Stop the Sale of Hydro One.

"To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear

mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario.”

I affix my signature to this and I will give it to Lindsey to give it to the desk.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have another petition to the provincial Legislature of Ontario.

“Whereas the Conservative government promised to institute patient-based budgeting for health care services in the 1995 Common Sense Revolution; and

“Whereas community care access centres now face a collective shortfall of \$175 million due to a funding freeze by the provincial government; and

“Whereas due to this funding shortfall, community care access centres have cut back on home care services affecting many sick and elderly Ontarians; and

“Whereas these cuts in services are mostly in home-making services, forcing Ontarians into more expensive long-term-care facilities or back into hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately institute real patient-based budgeting for health care services, including home care, so as to ensure that working families in Ontario can access the care services they need.”

This letter is signed by a number of my constituents from the smaller community of Atikokan, who share the concern we all do about home care funding. I affix my signature in agreement with their concerns.

HYDRO ONE

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): These petitions keep flying in here. This one says, “Stop the Sale of Hydro One.

“To the Legislature of the province of Ontario:

“Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario’s electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario’s economy;

“Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

“Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

“Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

“Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

“To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear

mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario.”

I have affixed my signature to this excellent petition.

1550

ENVIRONMENTAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights was intended to give the citizens of Ontario a way of getting involved in environmental decision-making; and

“Whereas the Environmental Bill of Rights requires Ontario government ministries to develop a statement of values to ‘guide the minister and the ministry staff when making decisions that affect the environment’; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education has been exempted from the requirements of the Environmental Bill of Rights despite the importance of environmental education; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Education has eliminated environmental science as a stand-alone set of courses that focuses entirely on the science of the environment from the secondary school curriculum; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Education is responsible for developing educational policies that directly affect the ecological literacy of future citizens and is, thus, partly responsible for the health of our environment; and

“Whereas the citizens of Ontario are being denied their right to shape the decisions being made about environmental education by the Ministry of Education’s exclusion from the Environmental Bill of Rights;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to prescribe the Ministry of Education to the Environmental Bill of Rights without further delay.”

This is brought to me by Dr Tom Puk, who is fighting this battle very vigorously up in Thunder Bay at Lakehead University. I’m very happy to sign my name.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): This is like a news flash. I have some more petitions here. It says, “Stop the Sale of Hydro One,” and it goes on to say:

“Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario’s electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario’s economy;

“Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

“Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

“Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

I affix my signature to this. Jordan, I want you to give it to the desk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One Inc. and its subsidiaries, when Bill 80 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment, and

That the vote on second reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That on the same day that the bill receives second reading, it may be called for third reading; and

When the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the third reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mr Baird moves that, pursuant to standing order—dispense? Dispense.

The Chair recognizes the chief government whip.

Hon Mr Baird: I think it's time that we vote on this important piece of legislation. The objectives of this bill formally remove the directors of Hydro One from the board of Hydro One and its subsidiaries. They authorize the appointment of board members as necessary until the next annual meeting of Hydro One. They impose restrictions on Hydro One compensation for termination and resignation for designated officers. They require negotiation of new compensation packages for designated officers of Hydro One and nullify existing—

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Would you check whether or not there's a quorum, please?

The Acting Speaker: Would you check and see if there's a quorum, please?

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk Assistant: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the chief government whip.

Hon Mr Baird: I can't believe it. There's only one Liberal in the House, and there's a quorum. It's my friend Joe Cordiano, a very hard-working guy. But the Tories are here to do the business of the day.

As I said, this bill requires the negotiation of new compensation packages for designated officers of Hydro One and nullifies existing contract provisions that are in excess of the act. It puts in place means to cover any excess amounts paid and prevents proceedings against the crown or others related to this act.

The people of Ontario feel very strongly about this, that something was not working on the side of taxpayers at Hydro One. They wanted their government and their elected representatives to act.

Frankly, I find it absolutely amazing that this bill wouldn't have gone through on a wink and a nod so that we could be debating the more important public policy issues here at Queen's Park. I would have thought that the Liberal and New Democratic parties would have said, "Let's pass this bill right away so we can debate the Hydro bill and more important pieces of legislation." I was shocked that the Liberals and New Democrats held this bill up for so long. That's why we're proposing to move to the next stage of debate, which is a decision, a vote, so that we can get on and deal with other important issues of the day. I think it's incredibly important.

Despite the resignation of most of the members of the Hydro One board, this legislation is necessary to allow for the appointment of new directors and to protect the people of Ontario against excessive provisions in some current contracts of Hydro One executives.

The reason this bill is needed and the reason changes and private sector discipline are needed at Hydro One is because the reality of a market economy isn't working at Hydro One, because it is a broken-up part of the old Hydro One monopoly. None of us in this House are happy about it. None of us are satisfied. None of us want to see this continue. The people of Ontario want this bill passed.

The proposed legislation we're dealing with puts the people of Ontario first, through the government, who are the shareholders of Hydro One. This isn't the government's company. This isn't a government asset. This is the people's asset. I know people in St Marys and Stratford were equally as amazed as people in Greely, Osgoode, West Carleton, Richmond, Burritts Rapids, Barrhaven and Bells Corners with what they saw going on at Hydro One. They wanted a government to stand up and act. They wanted the government to intervene.

Chris Stockwell, the Minister of Energy, and our Premier, Ernie Eves, intervened, and intervened early, to

protect taxpayers. Everyone on this side of the House wants to protect taxpayers. It's the opposition who are holding this up. They'll be able to say, "Oh, well, we've got one more time allocation motion" and "Isn't the government draconian?" on what is probably the most reasonable piece of legislation introduced in this session that I can think of.

I don't want to be debating this. I want to be debating health care, education, environmental controls and the importance of clean water in Ontario. I'd like to be debating the budget today. We could talk about the important investments made in health care, where the health care budget, for the first time in Ontario, is going over \$25 billion. I'd like to be debating education. I'd like to be debating the substantial increase the Minister of Finance gave toward clean drinking water in the budget. I'd like to be debating that this is the fourth balanced budget in a row. When I worked for the federal government in Ottawa, for the nine years I was there, we didn't bring in one balanced budget. So four balanced budgets in a row is really unprecedented and is something that all Ontarians, particularly Conservatives and neo-conservatives, can take great pride in. We're fulfilling the campaign commitments we made to balance the budget. It really is unprecedented and I'm very proud of that accomplishment. The Minister of Finance did a good job.

I find the comments we've heard about the budget amusing. Despite the 190-odd tax cuts we've already had and the four new tax cuts in this bill, the people who were against the tax cuts in the first place now want the tax cuts faster. The people who voted against tax cuts that were to go into effect in six months are now mad that they're going to 18 months. But they didn't want them at all. I voted for all the tax cuts. I support them. Who wouldn't want to see them sooner? But it's a balanced plan with balanced leadership to ensure we balance the budget and meet the important priorities in health care. I think of the Queensway-Carleton Hospital and the Ottawa Hospital, where the supervisor, Dennis Timbrell, and the new president, Jack Kitts, have done a phenomenal job, and the difference this budget will make for that institution. I think of the important priorities in education, where the school boards in my riding will be able to get an increase in support for classroom education.

I wish we could debate that, instead of this resolution. It would be better. I would think this legislation should go in a wink and a nod and we could get on to debating the more important public policy issues of the day, but we're not, because we're debating a bill like this that should have gone through on a wink and a nod.

Frankly, I don't think we should be debating it. I think we should adjourn debate on this issue, and I would move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1602 to 1632.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until counted.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until counted.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 22; the nays are 47.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

Hon Mr Baird: I feel badly that we changed our minds on that one—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Baird: I'm not for turning. I recall that great speech by a British Prime Minister when she said, "The lady is not for turning." Margaret Thatcher was a very wise Prime Minister.

This time allocation motion we're dealing with shouldn't be debated. We should vote on this bill and talk about other important things like the budget brought in by the finance minister. That's the type of thing we should be debating. We should be debating the important needs of our environment. We should be debating quality education. We should be talking about the need for new schools.

In my riding, in Stittsville, we need a new school for the public board. The schools are overcrowded there. They are busing children out of the community to the hamlet of Munster. That is an incredible priority for me. We needed two when I ran for office in 1999. We got the public elementary school built in Davidson Heights in south Nepean. They just opened it recently—the Adrienne Clarkson Elementary School—a lovely facility made possible by a change in the Education Act which allowed local development charges to be used both to buy the land and to construct the school. I was pleased to be there, and the Governor General was there to help open the school. That was a great occasion.

We should be debating education. That's something important. But we're not debating education. We're debating this time allocation motion, which is something that naturally concerns me. Accordingly, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Baird has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1636 to 1706.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

You may take your seats.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 24; the nays are 47.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Further debate?

Hon Mr Baird: I was talking to the Minister of Education about the importance of a new school in Stittsville. That's what I'd rather be debating here today instead of this time allocation motion. I do believe, though, that the motion we're debating on the bill for Hydro One and the board of directors and those issues are important. It shouldn't consume this much debate but it is important.

I was impressed with the way our Minister of Energy, the Honourable Chris Stockwell, stepped in to deliver a really amazing act of courage on behalf of taxpayers in this province. I want to congratulate him while he's here on this important issue.

I was reviewing the motion in one of our 30-minute bells. It made me think about the resolution and I would like to amend it.

I would move that government notice of motion number 32 be amended by deleting the second paragraph and substituting the following therefor:

"That the vote on second reading may not be deferred, and".

The Acting Speaker: Mr Baird has moved that government notice of motion number 32 be amended by deleting the second paragraph and substituting the following therefor:

"That the vote on second reading may not be deferred, and".

Hon Mr Baird: Speaking to my amendment now, not the main motion, I don't think the motion should be deferred. I think we should vote on it right away. I think it would be an important opportunity for all members of the Legislative Assembly, including the member for Etobicoke Centre, to vote on this, and the Minister of Labour, who is here. He was also the Minister of Transportation, a good Minister of Transportation. He helped with a lot of projects in eastern Ontario. I know he doesn't want to defer the vote either. He would like the motion amended not to defer it.

I regret that we're here debating this. I think this bill should have just gone through right away so we could be debating the hydro reorganization, so we could be debating health care and health care reform. I was pleased to see in the budget that the Minister of Finance brought forward in this place this week the proposals on MRIs. I thought that was a welcome addition and I wish we could debate that. Maybe we could debate that if I moved adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Baird has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1711 to 1741.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Baird has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 0; the nays are 48.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost. The Chair recognizes the chief government whip.

Hon Mr Baird: Mr Speaker, in debating this amendment to the motion, I was wondering if I might withdraw my amendment to the motion.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, you may.

Hon Mr Baird: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker; I do.

This Hydro bill is one which I'd hoped we could have passed more quickly so we could debate more substantive issues. I am pleased, though, that when the Minister of Energy, the Premier, the government, this caucus, this team, saw taxpayers' money being wasted, they stepped in to try to address the situation.

I would rather be debating important issues like tax cuts, and the four tax cuts contained in Janet Ecker's budget: the tax cut for small business that's going forward; the tax cut in the mining industry, which I know is so important in northern Ontario. I would like to be debating those. I would like to be talking about the 190-plus tax cuts we've already had that have been so important in helping create jobs and encourage investment in Ontario. I would like to be talking about the budget, where we saw a significant increase once again this year to help people with developmental disabilities. The budget provided \$49 million of new operating support to associations for community living right across the province of Ontario, plus more than \$10 million in capital support for places to live for people with developmental disabilities. I know that will make a huge difference in the lives of a lot of very vulnerable people in the province of Ontario. I wish we could be debating that this afternoon because that's an incredibly important issue. It's one which I worked tremendously hard on over the last three or four years both as a member and as a minister and one which I continue to hold very close to my heart.

I am very optimistic and excited that tomorrow is Community Living Day here at the Ontario Legislature, where representatives from the Ontario Association for Community Living are coming from right across the province to Queen's Park. Each party will be giving a speech on that tomorrow. They'll also have the opportunity to meet with members from all sides of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I think that's good news, because we can do more to help people who are vulnerable.

The plan contained in the budget created a number of very important initiatives: places to live for people with developmental disabilities—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. There will be no yelling back and forth. If one member has the floor, until somebody else gets it, you wait your turn.

Hon Mr Baird: We can do more to help people with developmental disabilities, and that's an important issue that doesn't get enough debate in this House. We can do

it through programs like home sharing, we can do it through supported independent living, we can do it through conventional group homes, we can do it through organizations like Reena. I attended a function for Reena. It's a developmental disability organization up in the north end of Toronto, in York region. They opened an elder home in recent years and are proposing to open another one. They had a fundraising function the other evening to help raise funds for this important project to help people with developmental disabilities who are aging. For the first time, we're seeing people with developmental disabilities age and reach their 60s, 70s and 80s. This is something we simply didn't see in years gone by. They're facing the same challenges that we all face in our retiring years. The initiatives contained in the budget will be able to help address those important challenges. I'm very pleased that the government did that.

The more than \$60 million in support for people with developmental disabilities in this year's budget builds on the \$55 million in last year's budget, it builds on the \$50 million in the budget before and it builds on the \$35 million announced in 1998. This is a group that doesn't get a lot of focus, doesn't get a lot of attention in the media or in political circles, but one which is incredibly important.

We've got to be mindful, in my judgment, to ensure that it's not necessarily those with the loudest voices who get heard but those who have the most important interests and that we, as elected representatives, have to compensate for that voice. Associations for community living may not have the voice of a chamber of commerce or a teachers' union, but they're every bit as important in the province of Ontario, and I'm very pleased that the minister, Janet Ecker, followed through on the commitment of Jim Flaherty, the former Minister of Finance, and Ernie Eves, the Minister of Finance before that, to create a substantial number of new initiatives and supports to help people with developmental disabilities.

I was also pleased in the budget presented by the Minister of Finance that she followed through on the commitments made by Jim Flaherty on violence against women, to build more beds and more shelters for domestic violence around the province of Ontario. That's something that's important. The plan that was announced last year will see more than 300 new beds, and more than 136 beds will be refurbished, because we can do more to address the challenge of domestic violence in the province of Ontario. But that money would be meaningless unless there were substantial operating supports. There's \$3 million, growing to \$9 million, starting last year, to provide operating supports in that area. I think that's something that's important.

We can do more. That's why I was pleased to work with the former member for Beaches-East York, Frances Lankin, when she came forward with a proposal for a domestic violence help line, to take the one that's in Toronto and make it province-wide. I was very pleased to attend the launch of that new initiative this past April. It

was incredibly important. I was very proud to play a role in that. The Attorney General, David Young, was very supportive in helping fund those types of initiatives through the victims' justice fund, which is about \$4.5 million over five years and of which I think we can all be incredibly proud.

I would rather be debating those types of important initiatives here than a time allocation motion on a bill that should have gone through much more quickly, so we could debate these important public policy initiatives. That's why the motion before us here requires that part of debate is voting, and we have to make a decision on this important issue.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Baird has moved government notice of motion number 32. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Gary J.	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, AL	Wilson, Jim
Eves, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Flaherty, Jim	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Murdoch, Bill	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Bountrogianni, Marie	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Charley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 50; the nays are 24.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1803.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

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**Official Report
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des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 19 June 2002

Mercredi 19 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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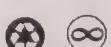
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 June 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2001 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 18, 2002, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): We'll be looking, in rotation, to the New Democratic Party, I believe it's leadoff. The Chair recognizes the member for Nickel Belt.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): At the outset let me say that this is the leadoff for the NDP in terms of the response to the budget. Our leader is in his riding at an important event, and our finance critic is actually with a very close friend because of a death in her family. So I'm going to be doing the leadoff for the next hour on behalf of the NDP, which was quite unexpected. I discovered this at about 5 o'clock. I will do the best I can over the next hour or however long I can carry this, and hope that our finance critic and our leader will have an opportunity to also speak before this House finishes, which I gather may be next week.

Let me begin with what I thought was central in terms of the fiscal problems this government is experiencing and how that appears in this budget. If you go to page 6 of the budget document that was read by Ms Ecker, it says at the top, "Our government has pursued an aggressive tax cut plan for one very simple reason. Tax cuts work." Then you go down three paragraphs, and the government says the following: "In the meantime, because of our short-term fiscal situation, I propose to introduce legislation to delay, for one year only, the current planned reductions in personal income tax and in the general and manufacturing rates of corporate income tax, and the next step of the equity in education tax credit. We will also delay by one year planned reductions in education property tax cuts." The clear question is: if tax cuts work, why is the government pursuing this deferral? Surely this deferral would create new jobs and get them out of the short-term fiscal problem they have.

I want to make clear our party's position, which is that the government should cancel the corporate tax cut; cancel the personal income tax cut, which only benefits people at the high end of the income tax scheme in Ontario; and cancel the private school rebate, because we

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Mercredi 19 juin 2002

are fundamentally opposed to this government using public dollars to finance private schools. Our position has long been to cancel these tax cuts, because they come at the expense of much-needed funding for programs which I believe are priorities for people in Ontario: health care, education, the environment and community services.

Frankly, the tax cuts also cost the province money, because this government has had to borrow, over the seven years that it has implemented tax cuts, in order to have the revenue to pay for them. We have pointed out that there are two significant, serious problems with the government's tax cut regime: (1) the cost to important programs to pay, because the government has to have the revenue somehow to pay for these tax cuts, and (2) the borrowing that the government has actually undertaken to finance the tax cut, which has directly led to an increase in the province's debt as a result.

So our position is: cancel them. But what I find so interesting and so amusing is that the government, in the deferral, has to admit that tax cuts do not work, because if tax cuts were working, the government would continue with its tax cut regime and that would see them through this short-term fiscal problem that they allegedly have. It's clear to me, if tax—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The rotation for speaking goes clockwise, so that to my right you'll have to wait till the next turn and to my left you're going to have to wait till thereafter. Other than that, you don't have the floor, so you're not allowed to speak.

Ms Martel: If tax cuts were so fabulous and tax cuts were responsible for stimulating the economy, how is it that the current government finds itself in the serious short-term fiscal situation that it does? If the government really believed that tax cuts would get them out of this problem, then the government would have come to this place and probably accelerated even further their tax cut regime or looked at new tax cuts. But what is clear is that the government has a fiscal problem and the only way the government can deal with the fiscal problem, because the tax cuts aren't going to do it for them, is to actually defer them. To ensure that the revenue that would have gone out with the tax cuts, revenue that in my opinion would have been lost as a corporate tax cut or a tax cut to the private sector, is revenue that the government now actually has to use—

The Acting Speaker: Order. I was hearing these desks rattle. I'd ask you to maybe put your hands underneath them, because I don't want to hear them. I don't

know what else to say. I think you should recognize that I don't want to hear any more of them.

1850

Ms Martel: I know it's hard for the government members to admit that tax cuts don't work. I feel very badly that they are in the position of their new Minister of Finance having to come forward and in one breath say, "Tax cuts work" and three paragraphs later say, "Well, they work so well that we have to defer them for this year because we need the money to finance the deficit that we have and we need the money that would have been lost in tax cuts to actually finance some increases in health care spending." That's the reality.

If tax cuts really did work, the government would have accelerated them even further in this budget, a step further than the former Minister of Finance tried last October when he said he was going to accelerate the income tax cut to try to stimulate the economy. Clearly that didn't work very well, because here we are with a budget in June, and whatever acceleration the government had in place or planned last October is certainly out the window. Not only is the acceleration of the tax cut gone, as promised by Minister Flaherty last October, but the government has now had to take the step to also say that they're going to have to defer for a year the tax cuts that have been promised.

What's even more interesting is that the government now has to introduce legislation to allow that to happen. The government now has to introduce legislation—probably they'll have to repeal something before this is over—to allow that to happen. This is the same government that brought in legislation and said, "We have to have a referendum if we're going to have more tax increases. And if we have a deficit, then some of our ministers are going to be personally liable."

So here we are, dealing with a government that's now going to have to bring in legislation to help them defer tax cuts that they've been trying to tell people really work and stimulate the economy. If that was the case, what are we doing here this evening dealing with the middle of page 6, which says that things are so bad in the short-term that obviously having more cuts isn't going to work to stimulate the economy? Obviously, keeping in place the tax cuts they promised, and even promised to accelerate last October, isn't going to work to stimulate the economy, so the only choice the government has to deal with its deficit position and try to have some money to spend on areas that people have identified as priorities, like health care, is to defer them for a year.

I'll say again that I think they should be cancelled outright. That is the position of our party. Cancel the corporate tax cuts, cancel the tax cuts for high-income earners, cancel the tax rebate for private sector schools, because public money should not be used to finance private or independent schools.

I was quite delighted to see that the government has had its back pushed against the wall and has had to defer the tax cuts. And I think that they, through that admission, have had to tell the people of Ontario, "Well, in

fact, tax cuts don't work that well to stimulate the economy. We've got a serious problem in the economy that wasn't resolved by our announcing last October that we were going to accelerate the corporate tax cuts. Indeed, the economy still isn't moving along the way we would like it to, and the only way we can deal with it, the only way we can have some revenue to deal with our deficit problem, is to actually cancel those planned tax cuts."

I thought that was really interesting. I was quite delighted to see the deferral. I'd be even happier if the government was forced to come forward and say they have to cancel these tax cuts altogether, because they continue to drain money from important priority programs that people in Ontario are very interested in, like health and education and the environment and community services. Frankly, by financing these tax cuts, the government has to continue to borrow, and has, in fact, increased Ontario's debt as a result. Even through good economic times, the debt of the province of Ontario has increased, and that can be related directly back to this government borrowing to finance those tax cuts.

The other thing I thought was quite interesting on the part of the government, as they try and make sure they're not in a deficit position—because if they are, there's some consequences that kick in legislatively and in terms of the personal liability of some ministers—is the significant change around the government's projections for sales and rentals. If you look at the budget papers, on page 57, under other revenue that the government believes will be generated this year, there is a line item called "Sales and Rentals." This year, the government anticipates it will bring in revenue on the order of \$2.4 billion. What is interesting is that this is about two or three times higher than in previous years, with the exception of 1999, when the government sold the 407 and in that year, realized revenues on the order of \$2.1 billion. In that year, we all know what the government did. They sold the 407 and used some of that money in the election campaign.

What's clear the government is doing this time is looking to sell something else, something quite significant—maybe two or three things that are significant—in order to have that same kind of money. I don't know that they're going to want that money so much for an election; that may be some time off. What I think the money is going to be used for is to try to deal with the government's deficit problem. That revenue from the sale of an asset will be used against what is clearly a deficit problem that the government has had to deal with, in one sense by deferring the tax cut and, I think, in a second sense by this sale.

What is clear, because the Ministry of Finance officials told our staff in the budget lock-up on Monday is that the government is projecting quite a significant increase in that line item, and the Ministry of Finance officials say that number is partly projected revenue from the sale of 49% of Hydro One, as well as Ontario Power Generation asset sales. This makes clear what we've bee-

saying all along, that the government's Bill 58 really does set the table for this government to sell off a significant chunk of Hydro One. The government should just come forward and tell that to the people of the province and be honest with them.

1900

It was very interesting when the Premier came forward with the bill and said, "We don't really know what we're doing. We might sell off a portion of it, we might develop a trust," and I guess he had some other options. "We're not clear, but we need the bill only to very clearly show we have some authority to sell if we have to." From details in the bill which relate directly to a sale of Hydro One, it is clearly the government's intention to sell off a huge portion of Hydro One. That was confirmed in the budget lock-up on Monday when Ministry of Finance officials told us that a big chunk of the revenue increase in the sales and rentals line item is projected by the government to come from the sale of 49% of Hydro One.

Our party has been consistently opposed to the sale of Hydro One, we have been consistently opposed to the deregulation of electricity in Ontario and we will continue to be opposed to those two things. But it clearly makes no sense to me that the government, in order to try to deal with a deficit, much of which has come because of their need to finance tax cuts, would turn to selling important public assets as a way to raise revenue to deal with that same deficit problem. I think it makes no sense at all to sell off an asset that frankly belongs to the public of Ontario—not the government of Ontario but the public. It is the public, through their rates, who over many years have paid for the development of the transmission lines and paid for the development of the stations that produce energy in this province, energy which frankly has been sold at cost and which has been reliable and a great asset not only to residential homeowners but to businesses, farmers, hospitals, schools and major manufacturing companies in this province.

What is clear to me is that the government saw a very serious deficit problem when the Minister of Finance was starting to develop the budget, and in order to try to deal with what certainly would have been a deficit has decided to (a) stave off the tax cuts for the moment, because they would have cost the government in terms of revenues, and (b) sell 49% of Hydro One. I think that will happen this summer, when we are away from this place and when people may be on holidays. The dirty deal will be done and 49% of Hydro One will be sold off, and that sets the table for the government to try to sell off the balance in the future.

We are very much opposed to that. We have been up front from the beginning in our opposition to the sell-off of both those sets of assets: the transmission lines and the generating stations themselves. We think that will result in higher electricity costs for the ratepayers of Ontario in the same way that Albertans and Californians experienced higher energy costs. We see no rhyme or reason to selling off an asset long paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario through hydro rates simply because the govern-

ment has a deficit problem and wants a quick sale in order to recoup some money to deal with it.

That also leads to our concern regarding what price these assets will be sold at. It's clear the government has forecast specific revenue that it hopes to raise from the sale of 49% of Hydro One and some other funding, and we're not sure of the total of that, with respect to the sale of OPG generating stations.

Because I think the government needs to raise that kind of revenue to deal with what would otherwise be a deficit situation, my concern is the government will end up selling these valuable assets at fire sale prices. It is clear, as a result of what happened in September and what has happened with respect to Enron, that there's not a huge appetite out there at the moment in the private sector in terms of buying up some of these assets. I think the government has found that to be the case, because a number of these assets have been out on the block, so to speak, for some time and haven't been sold. I'm thrilled that they haven't, but I think a big part of that has to do with what happened in September and the very serious fallout from Enron and all the court cases and everything else that will come.

So my concern, and the concern of our party, is that the government needs to raise that kind of revenue through their sales and rentals to deal with the deficit situation. If the government gets an offer, any offer, the government just might take that offer. That offer may not reflect whatsoever the value of the generating station in question.

Again, it just makes no sense to us to sell off something that has served the province of Ontario so well for so long for some quick cash to deal with the government's deficit problem. I think before we're finished we're going to see a fire sale of some of these important assets because the government is so desperate to raise the revenue to deal with what otherwise would be a deficit situation in this budget.

I think what was also interesting—and I go back to Hydro One—is that the minister certainly has tried to tell the public, and has mentioned on more than one occasion in this House, that the proceeds from the sale of Hydro One would go to pay off the stranded debt. It was interesting because the other thing we checked with Hydro officials at the budget lock-up on Monday was to determine whether or not the proceeds from Hydro One's sale and sales of OPG assets would in fact flow to the stranded debt. While the ministry officials insisted that would be the case, it's interesting that they were completely unable to show anywhere in the budget documents, in the budget papers, where that clearly takes place. So while on the one hand they told us very clearly, "Absolutely. That's where the proceeds are going to go. The revenue will go to deal with the stranded debt"—which the minister has tried to say again and again in this House is the reason for the sale of a portion of Hydro One in the first place; first, it was 100% and now it's 49%—it is true the Hydro officials were completely unable to show in the budget where that would take place,

where any of the \$2.4 billion in sales and rentals, much of which has to do with Hydro One and the generating assets, would actually show up against the stranded debt.

So I think this sale has nothing to do with dealing with the stranded debt. Again, I think it has everything to do with the government trying to raise some quick money to deal with what would be a deficit situation. We very much regret, as a political party, that the government is going down the road of selling very valuable assets to deal with a deficit situation that has primarily come about because of this government's obsession with tax cuts.

I want to look now at northern Ontario—because of course that is the part of the world I represent—and say a couple of things about what I see in the government's budget. The first thing I have to say is that it's very clear from what I see in the budget that it demonstrates a complete lack of commitment by this government to northern Ontario—a complete lack of commitment—which frankly, I would say, has now carried on with this new Premier from an old Premier, which is very regrettable, because the previous Premier was from northern Ontario and the current Premier had a seat in northern Ontario for some 20 years. You couldn't tell from previous budgets, and you certainly can't tell from this budget, that two consecutive Premiers who came from northern Ontario could care less about northern Ontario. Let me look at a couple of details.

First, we noted that the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp was underspent last year by about \$44 million. That became transparent because in the budget document the government had to transfer NOHFC funds from its operating line to its capital line. It's interesting that on page 33 of the budget papers it says, "The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation operating expenditure declined by \$97 million in-year as a result of the reclassification and transfer of NOHFC expenditure from operating to capital. This reclassification was made to better reflect NOHFC's investments in northern infrastructure."

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When you flip over to the capital side and look at the changes, you would expect there to be an automatic transfer of \$97 million from the operating budget to the capital budget. What's interesting on page 34 is the following: "The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation capital expenditure increased by a net \$53 million in-year as a result of the reclassification and transfer of \$97 million in spending from operating to capital expenditure, partially offset by lower-than-planned NOHFC expenditures during the fiscal year."

I've represented a northern riding for almost 15 years now. My colleague Tony Martin from the Soo has represented a northern riding for over 10. I can tell you there is no lack of projects in northern Ontario that could be funded by the government through the NOHFC if the government actually chose to do so.

In fact, as I was reading this and thinking about the fact that \$44 million did not get spent last year in northern Ontario when indeed many communities have many

projects that could be funded, I thought about a particular situation in Sudbury. The government, well over a year ago—probably closer to 18 months ago—announced there would be money from SuperBuild to help the city of Sudbury redevelop its David Street water plant so it would be in compliance with this province's clean water drinking guidelines. The government made the announcement and then, for probably six months after that, essentially held the community hostage through negotiations and never got the money out the door. In fact, in a season when there could have been some work done, the city of Sudbury could not get the government to flow some of the money that had been announced for that project. They went through a ridiculous process with SuperBuild to try to deal with the proposal, have SuperBuild accept it and try to get some money out the door. The money wasn't announced until last fall. They missed a whole construction season.

As a result of knowing full well they wouldn't be able to start construction on July 1, 2001, last year the city had to write to the Ministry of the Environment and ask for an exemption from the clean drinking water guidelines because the plant was not going to be ready and was not going to meet the government's December deadline.

Here is a community that needed \$16 million in order to get that work done so it could meet this province's clean drinking water guidelines. The government wasted any number of months in ridiculous negotiations at SuperBuild that finally led to an allocation sometime last fall, after the construction season was passed. Then we have the prospect that the NOHFC doesn't spend \$44 million on projects needed in northern Ontario. There's no end of projects in northern Ontario. There's no doubt that a big part of the problem is that the guidelines for funding at the NOHFC are far too restrictive to actually allow communities to get capital projects underway. Maybe the new minister should take a serious look at that, especially in light of the fact he couldn't spend \$44 million last year.

The city of Sudbury is not the only community that found itself in that position. In the south end of my riding I have a small community called Alban, which put in an application to do some essential health and safety upgrades at its community centre. They applied through this ministry's \$300-million tourism fund—I'm not even sure what the program is called. In any event, there was such a lineup and such a long list of communities that were applying that another native community in my riding didn't get funds and this community didn't get funds until many months after they had originally applied.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): How did they do with Bob Rae?

Ms Martel: My point is this: here is a capital fund and \$44 million of it was not spent. I can tell the member from Ottawa, because he is here and because I was the chair of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp for the whole time I was minister, that every single year we spent every single penny that was available. I have to tel-

you, Mr Guzzo, I am glad you raised that point. I am very glad you raised that point, because I can stand here and say that in every single year that I was minister, we spent every penny that was available at the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. We knew then and we know now that northern communities do have needs, capital needs. At that time, we were supporting a number of businesses which probably would have gone under, gone down the toilet, because of the recession. We supported them because it was the right thing to do.

But I'm astonished that the Conservative government could put in the budget the fact that \$44 million was not spent. I'm assuming they are going to try to say that's because there weren't the projects available. That makes no sense, no sense at all, because I come from a riding where projects that went in were not funded because there was such a waiting list. I say to the new minister, Mr Wilson, you had better take a serious look at this and you had better redo some of the criteria, because there are needs out there and those needs should be met.

I'll give one example of what the minister could do. There are a number of very small communities across northern Ontario that have to meet the province's clean drinking water guidelines. One of those communities in my riding is a village called Foleyet. It is so small that it is not even an incorporated municipality; it's run by a local service board. That local service board has to make repairs and renovations to its water and sewage plant that are in the order of well over \$200,000. This is from a community that has about 300 permanent residents.

We have an application in to OSTAR now. I have been tracking that. I hope that will be funded soon so they can actually do some construction work this summer, because they've already had a boil-water order this spring. I certainly hope the federal government will come through and provide its share of financing for this project.

That community can apply to the northern Ontario heritage fund for 10% of its local share, which is one third of the cost. This is a community that can't afford 3% toward a \$200,000 project. It's 300 people. It's so small, it's not even a municipality. That local service board will not be able to find the local share that it needs to pay for its portion, even if the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp comes through and provides 10%.

My suggestion to the minister, because the community of Foleyet in my riding is like that—and probably the community of Gogama, which is also run by a local service board, will be in that position, and there are many, many others—if the government wants to look at how to pend some of that money and help northern municipalities, it should go back to that specific commitment and raise that 10% share to something higher so that those communities, because they've got to fundraise most of that money, will actually be able to fundraise their share necessary to make sure the water guidelines are met and to make sure that their plants are actually operating in a safe way and providing safe drinking water. That's one suggestion.

I look as well at two ministries that are very important in northern Ontario. One is the Ministry of Natural Resources; the other is the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

In this budget I see yet another cut to the Ministry of Natural Resources, this time in the order of \$20 million, which clearly will mean yet more staff cut at natural resources, the same staff who are supposed to be protecting our natural resources, be they fish and wildlife, forestry resources or aggregate resources. It is becoming impossible for the Ministry of Natural Resources to have the staff on the ground to protect those resources on all of our behalf. I just say that another \$20-million cut will seriously jeopardize the ability of MNR staff, particularly conservation officers, to do their job, to protect natural resources in this province.

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What was kind of ironic about this announcement was that it came on the heels of passage of Bill 135, the government's fish and wildlife bill, which is supposed to guarantee the rights of Ontario residents to hunt and fish. I've got to tell you that people who hunt and fish in this province are terribly concerned about protection of their wildlife and fish resource, about conservation, and they know that if the Ministry of Natural Resources doesn't have the staff out there to do the job, their rights are meaningless. Whatever the government passes, whatever bill—Bill 135 is the one this House dealt with—is going to be meaningless if there are not the staff on the ground to ensure protection of those resources, and conservation of them when that's necessary.

Also, on the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, that's a \$2-million cut there. That budget is going from \$79 million down to \$77 million. There aren't many people left in the Ministry of Northern Development now to deliver the programs that need to be delivered. I think that will have a very serious impact on many of those communities experiencing serious economic difficulties. A study was released in only the last couple of months that showed that young people in northern Ontario continue to leave and never come back, and that is causing serious, serious population problems in so many of our communities. It doesn't help when this government cuts one more time the budget of the one ministry that is solely devoted to programming in northern Ontario. That's going mean more staff gone and that's going to mean more programming gone, and that just isn't going to help the serious youth out-migration situation that has been clearly documented and most clearly articulated in a recent report released within the last two months.

As well, the government did nothing in this budget to guarantee to those of us in northern Ontario that the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission would remain in public hands. That has been a very important tool for economic development in northern Ontario, developed by a previous Conservative government, supported by New Democrats, supported by Liberals. The situation we find ourselves in is that this government is also interested in privatization of some of those assets.

Maybe that's where some of the money listed on their line item of rentals and sales is going to come from. Maybe they're going to sell the telecommunications section, which is a real money-maker for ONTC and helps them support their other services like bus and train services. Maybe they're going to be selling those, which of course might get the government a quick buck, might help them with their deficit problem, but sure isn't going to do anything positive with respect to the important transportation services that ONTC actually provides in our part of the province.

One other note: the government very briefly, on page 34, talked about its tax incentive zones and that it was going to have a consultation around that. This came from an announcement that was made in the throne speech where the government said that one of the things they were going to do to stimulate the northern economy was to create these tax incentive zones. I disagree with that. Marcel, if that was your idea, I've got to tell you I disagree with that fundamentally. I'll tell you why.

I see how northern communities compete against each other right now with respect to doctors. What northern communities do to each other trying to compete and trying to attract doctors is really godawful. Municipalities that can't afford it are trying to put up a house or offer a car or offer a job for the spouse of the physician or offer free rent in a medical building or pay for equipment or whatever. All kinds of municipalities in northern Ontario right now are so desperate for doctors that they have been caught in this kind of competition, which is completely destructive. You know what I think? I think the same thing is going to happen with respect to these tax incentive zones. I really do. I think that's just going to pit northern Ontario municipalities against other northern Ontario municipalities and there's not going to be a net gain. There aren't going to be new jobs. We're going to see one community lose jobs at the expense of another.

Frankly, there are four or five municipalities—the big ones, the major ones—in northern Ontario that would really be in a position to do something in terms of forgoing municipal revenue or municipal taxation. I'm assuming that's what this government is talking about, that it's not talking about forgoing provincial taxes. Some municipalities are going to be in a financial position to do that. Do you know what? That's not going to result in a net gain. They're going to be into the same kind of really ugly, endless competition against each other that they are now caught in with respect to trying to attract and retain doctors.

The government has a really important role with respect to economic development in northern Ontario. I wish the government would assume it. I've seen the government just continue to back away and back away and back away with respect to economic development issues in the north. This scheme, while it may be supported by some of the northern mayors—I know they do support it, and I disagree with them—I think will just be very detrimental to municipalities. It will cost many municipalities in the north that can't really afford to forgo municipal

revenue. It will just pit them against each other and will not result in a net gain of jobs or a net gain of economic development in our part of the province. I think the government should just get rid of this idea and start looking at what the government itself, as a responsible player in economic development, could do in northern Ontario.

Let me look at health, because of course this is one of my critic areas. I'll make a couple of comments. It's interesting, and important—I should point that out—that the government recognized hospital needs in the province of Ontario. It is clear that hospitals had some very serious needs that had not been met. If you look at an update that came from the OHA on May 27—this was an update to its members—it says the following: "The current hospital funding problems stem directly from the planned under-spending in the 2001 provincial budget. At that time the government was advised of the real needs of hospitals to maintain current programs, and those needs were not included in the budget."

The consequence of that not being met in the 2001 budget was that we had over 100 of the 160 hospitals in Ontario operating in a deficit situation. We also had a situation where those same hospitals, trying to cope with operating in the red, operating on reserves, were also not clear about how they were going to maintain even their current level of services if the government didn't respond. So I am pleased to see that the government recognized the very serious mistake it made in last year's budget by consciously underfunding hospital needs, and I am pleased that the government has provided what looks to be the \$300 million that will get those 100 hospitals out of their current deficit position and the balance of the money, some \$700 million, which will maintain programs. The OHA several weeks ago said two things were needed: about \$300 million to get those hospitals out of deficit positions and about \$700 million to maintain current programming. It looks like that is what the government has done.

That begs the question—because the budget document talks about an expansion of cardiac services, an expansion of priority programs like dialysis and MRI scans—where is the money to allow that to happen? The Ontario Hospital Association and David McKinnon were pretty clear a couple of weeks ago to say that \$700 million would be needed just to maintain services that hospitals in Ontario were currently offering. He didn't say that \$700 million would allow them to maintain services and allow them to have new programs. On the contrary, that's what was required just to maintain the current level of service. So the question I have for the government is, in the funding that was announced, where is the money to actually go forward with new priority programs like cardiac services, dialysis or MRI? What has been given, in my opinion, does not allow for an expansion of those programs to happen. What has been allocated in the budget deals with the \$300-million deficit of 100 hospitals and then provides \$700 million for those hospitals to continue with current programming. I think that is

serious issue that I haven't seen resolved in this budget, because I don't see where the additional funds are to allow hospitals to actually expand services as they need to do to meet population needs and growing health care needs.

The other concern I have in this relates directly back to my community. We have a hospital that has been forced to amalgamate as the result of a decision made by this government's Health Services Restructuring Commission. We will have one site at the former Laurentian site, and that will be called the Sudbury Regional Hospital. The Sudbury Regional Hospital provides services not only to our community of Sudbury but provides really important services across northeastern Ontario: cardiac services, cancer services, neonatal services, trauma services. Yes, we have people who live in the community who are served at that hospital, but many people come from right across northeastern Ontario—from Timmins, from the Soo, from Iroquois Falls etc—to receive services there.

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Our hospital board, for many, many months now, has maintained that this government is not recognizing the need for our hospital to operate as a regional centre and is funding it as a community, and not a regional, hospital. In fact, last year at one point they were probably \$34 million in deficit because they would not cut programs, because they knew they were so desperately needed, but they also knew that the government was not recognizing the need for them to act as a regional centre and funding accordingly.

So there has been a review, which the hospital asked the Ministry of Health to undertake, an operational review that will be completed at the beginning of July. I fully anticipate that that review will show that our hospital has been underfunded, that it has been incapable of acting as a regional centre because it is not receiving the money to allow it to do so. And I fully hope that the review, led by Jean-Paul Aubé, will recommend to the minister to increase the base funding of our hospital so it can actually undertake the mandate it has been given. But my concern through all of that is that in the money that was announced by the government there will be no mechanism for this government to provide the increased funds that I hope will be recommended to allow the Sudbury Regional Hospital to act as a regional centre. I see no room for the government to move to allow it to increase that base funding so our hospital can do that. I see no room for it to move, because it seems to me that the money that was allocated is pretty well spoken for—\$300 million for deficits of those 100 hospitals and another \$700 million for the hospitals to continue to maintain their current level of service.

If we're going to be able to actually do what we have to do in that new hospital, which I believe will be clearly shown in the review, we're going to need some more money to do that. I don't see where that is accounted for with respect to our hospital. And there may be other hospitals that are in the very same situation. I can only

speak for Sudbury, because I've been following it, but I think there are going to be a number of hospitals that go through the process that we have in Sudbury that, despite the need for increased funding in a recommendation, may just not get that. That is going to dramatically impact on patient care, not only in Sudbury but right across northeastern Ontario.

The very serious concern I had with the section on health care in the budget has to do with the number of references where the government says it's interested in new partnerships with the private sector, be it having the private sector involved in the health capital planning review or the private sector involved in diagnostic services like the MRI and the CAT scanners. I raised this question yesterday in the House and we raised it again today, and I'll make the point again tonight: we are opposed to having even further private sector involvement in health care delivery, and we are opposed because we believe that comes directly at the expense of patient care. When you are paying for-profit providers to deliver health care services, 100% of the dollars that should go into patient care does not go into patient care. A portion of those dollars is siphoned off to provide profits for that for-profit provider. That is a fact. So I see this government, through this budget, deciding that on more than one front now it is going to go down the road of expanding even further the involvement of the private sector in health care, which will mean fewer health care dollars going directly into patient care.

It was interesting. The government talked about diagnostic services like MRI and CAT scanners, and I guess the government was hoping to appeal particularly to the association of radiologists because they were the ones who were sounding the alarm in the last two weeks about the desperate need for diagnostic services and the desperate need for government to respond so that there wouldn't be ongoing waiting lists. What's funny is that the association of radiologists has responded directly to the government announcement and it hasn't been positive. I'm looking at a press release that was issued on June 17 by the association which clearly says: "Today's budget does nothing for the hundreds of thousands of Ontario patients on waiting lists for commonly required diagnostic imaging examinations due to the Ontario government's chronic underfunding of radiology services," said the Ontario Association of Radiologists."

Further down in the press release: "The funding announced in the budget only addresses a fraction of radiology services in this province. 'CT and MRI only represent about 10% of imaging services in Ontario today—the government has ignored the other 90%—and the thousands of patients who are waiting to get these services,' said Dr Tarulli. 'At the same time, this is a government that now expects to be applauded for a decision that it was advised to make over five years ago but decided instead to sit on its hands and let the situation deteriorate.'"

So the government is not getting any kudos from the association of radiologists, the same people who deal

with the diagnostic services, for the announcement that was made in the budget, an announcement that essentially says some money will be provided, and also that we are also going to look for innovative new partnership opportunities between service providers to improve accessibility to diagnostic services like MRI and CAT scan. So the people who should be happy are not.

We will continue to say to the government that it's going in the wrong direction as it goes down the road to expanding even more the role of the private sector in health care. I think the government runs completely counter to what I hope the recommendations are going to be from Mr Romanow, when he makes those later this fall. I regret very much that the government didn't even wait until those recommendations could be released publicly, because many, many people have been involved in that process and I would have thought the government could have had the decency to listen to what Mr Romanow had to say.

Second, I say again that I think this will come at the expense of patient care. More of the health care dollars that should go directly into patient care are just going to be siphoned off and taken up by providing profits to those for-profit providers that the government is interested in having involved in this process.

It was interesting that just today, the largest MRI body-scan screening chain, called Wellbeing Inc, announced that it is going to establish itself in Toronto next year. It says it's going to cater to "the healthy and wealthy in Europe, the United States and Canada who want a 3-D peek at their innards." What was so interesting about the announcement was that the president and CEO said the following: "We're looking for you to swipe your AMEX card and take preventative, proactive control of your personal health." I guess so, because the cost of the scan is going to be US\$1,000 if you want to have a preventive scan done courtesy of Wellbeing Inc.

Today, I raised with the Minister of Health my concern as to whether or not this was a company that the government is now negotiating with or talking to, especially in light of what was declared in the budget and what the minister himself said just yesterday, that he was very interested in withdrawing a provincial regulation that would ban private clinics in the province, paving the way for increased private sector involvement, and he specifically referred to MRIs and CT scans. I asked the minister today, "Is this the group you're talking to?" and he said, "They haven't put in an application, so we haven't seen anything. Some of the changes in these services are targeted for underserviced areas." Well, I read the budget pretty carefully. Nowhere in the budget document does the government say that these new partnerships for more MRI or CT services are going to occur in underserviced areas. I didn't find that anywhere, and I think I looked at it pretty carefully and I read through it pretty carefully. So I'm not sure what the minister was talking about today when he was saying, "I don't think we'll be dealing in a partnership with them, because they're only interested in operating in Toronto and we want some of

these services in underserviced areas." That's not what the budget document says. It says nothing about these new services going to underserviced areas.

I want the government to be very clear that it is not interested in a partnership with Wellbeing Inc, because my overwhelming concern, if the government went down that road, is that the government would then not be in a position to ensure that people referred by their family doctor under OHIP for a CAT scan that might be life and death would not have their spot taken over by someone who was willing to put US\$1,000 on the table to jump the queue. That's the scenario that gets set up when you decide to bring the for-profit sector into health care. That is the scenario I am very concerned about: that someone with US\$1,000 at Wellbeing will just jump the queue over someone who was referred there by a family physician for an imaging process that might mean the difference between life and death.

I think the government should say flat out, "We are not interested in any partnership here," and I think the government should look for other solutions to the waiting lists that involve the public sector to ensure that 100% of health care dollars go into patient care and not into profits for the for-profit deliverers of health care services.

I was also quite concerned that the government referenced the private sector as well in the section where they say they will commission a health capital planning review, the point of that being to make recommendations to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health on how to streamline the government's health capital planning. It's very clear that representatives from the health care community and the private sector will be consulted as part of their review.

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Clearly, my concern is that this will facilitate the government's desire to have the private sector involved in hospital construction. We know the government has already made two announcements with respect to Ottawa and Brampton about how the private sector will be involved in the financing of hospital construction in those two communities. The New Democrats are opposed to that.

At the end of the day it's going to cost the taxpayers of Ontario more to have hospital construction financed that way, because it's the government of Ontario that has the best borrowing rate. If we are underwriting or supporting the loan for the construction of hospitals done by the private sector, that is going to cost us more, and then the private sector is going to want a bit of that financial action as well. They're not going to do that for free, are they? At the end of the day it's going to cost us more to construct those hospitals using the private sector than it would if the government engaged itself and had hospitals engaged in some longer-term borrowing to allow them to do that. I think all you have to do is look at the examples that are coming out of Britain now, where this issue has been under extreme scrutiny, to see that it has cost that jurisdiction, and the public, far more to have the private sector involved in capital construction.

The other concern we have is that it's not going to stop at capital construction. Before you're finished, when the private sector gets its foot in the door on capital construction, the next thing is the private sector operating much of what goes on in terms of daily programming in those hospitals. The New Democrats are not interested—not interested at all—in having the private sector delivering important health care services.

There was a very good study that was recently released in a medical journal, where researchers at McMaster University studied the mortality rates at a number of American hospitals over the last 15 years. What was very clear is that those mortality rates were far higher than they were in hospitals that were operated publicly, be it by religious organizations or be it by community boards, which is the majority of the cases here in Ontario. I'm not interested in having the private sector involved in the capital construction. I am certainly not interested in the private sector running operations in our hospitals. I think that is absolutely the wrong way to go because the bottom line will be profit, the bottom line will be, "How many nurses do we not have to bring on today in order to make a bit more money?" That will not be good at all for patient care, and I think the most recent study that appeared in the medical journal was very definite proof of that.

I regret that I didn't see in the budget a couple of things; for example, a very concrete announcement with respect to nurse practitioners. The government essentially repeated the announcement it made in the throne speech that it would double the number of nurse practitioners working in Ontario—no idea of what the timeline of that is going to be, no idea of what funding is going to be attached to that and certainly no idea of the base number of nurse practitioners the government is using to actually work from to say, "We'll double it." Is it 10 nurse practitioners we're going to double, is it 30, is it 100? What is it?

I regret that the government has done nothing around this really serious issue, because it is clear that nurse practitioners do have the skills to make a very important contribution to health care in the province, specifically in underserviced communities, four of which are in my own riding. We have long encouraged the government to, for example, fund nurse practitioners so that they could work with physicians in doctors' offices, so that each provides their own particular scope of practice and they promote health and illness prevention as well, not just treatment services, and that the government find a way to pay for that so that some of the really serious health care needs in the underserviced areas could actually be met.

The government announced in the throne speech a demonstration project involving 20 nurse practitioners in 12 underserviced communities. There's no need for a demonstration project. The scope of practice for nurse practitioners is well defined. They have been practising in the province for a number of years now. We have 268 nurse practitioners who have graduated from the MP program who are unemployed or underemployed, whose

skills we desperately need, especially in underserviced areas. The government should have come in the budget and said, "Never mind the demonstration project; we recognize the valuable skills of nurse practitioners, we want them to work in the health care system, we want to respond to the need for primary care in so many of our underserviced communities, and we have a mechanism that will pay for nurse practitioners to work in underserviced areas, to work with physicians in doctors' offices or in community health centres." That was another announcement that the government did nothing about.

The association of community health centres has had a proposal in to this government since the fall of 2000 to create 65 new community health centres in the province and to expand the existing health centres, of which there over 53. Since the fall of 2000 that proposal has been in. Many of those community health centres are located in underserviced areas and expansion of the same would really deal with many of those people who can't find access to primary health care. A number of the new centres would open up in areas where it's clear the community is underserviced for any range of health care providers. The government has done absolutely nothing since that time.

I was at the annual meeting of the association of community health care centres last week with the Liberal critic for health care, Lyn McLeod, and with the Associate Minister of Health and, as well, the member for Durham. They went there and mouthed to these people about how concerned they were and how committed they were to community health centres, and then there was absolutely nothing in the budget. I think it's worth repeating that since this government has been the government, only two new community health centres have been created and some four satellites have been expanded. That was after our government did 28 new CHCs in the time that we were the government. If this government was really committed to CHCs as a true model for primary care reform, then it would fund that very important proposal and this government would actually start down the road to really reforming primary care. It's very clear that the family health networks the government is supporting are not going to get us there. They are not working to provide real primary health care reform.

In conclusion, I say again that what was most interesting about the budget was the fact that the government has had to defer its tax cuts. I call on the government not just to defer the tax cuts, cancel them. Abandon them altogether.

The Acting Speaker: As all of you are aware, there are no comments and questions on the leadoff speeches, so we'll go in rotation to further debate.

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): I would like to start off by thanking my partner, Wendy, who is here tonight, who I love very much and has really been a great source of support for me. I'd like to thank her for making the trip down and spending a couple of days with me here in

Toronto. I appreciate her being here for my maiden speech.

It's nice to represent what I think is the greatest riding in the province of Ontario and that's Nipissing, of course. I'm thinking of all the towns like Trout Creek, Powassan, Callander, Astorville, North Bay, Bonfield, East Ferris, where I live, Corbeil, Rutherglen, Mattawa, all those great towns and cities that makeup my riding. I'm very proud to stand here tonight and say hello, if they're watching. I'm very proud to be your representative.

Of course, we're here talking about the budget that was just introduced. I find it very interesting, this whole process of debate. If the cameras could show this important debate—and it's very important that all parties get to speak for or against the budget. Let's be very clear: it's the job of the opposition and the third party to criticize what the government has come forward with, and that's what you've heard tonight. That's their job and you can tell they're having a tough time finding bad components of this budget. They are really stretching it out. Just to show you the concern, you have the NDP and the Liberals trying to hammer the government over this budget and how terrible it is, that it's not good for the province of Ontario. They're trying to demonstrate that with their words. I don't know if the cameras can pick it up, but there are three individuals from the NDP here tonight and four from the Liberal Party. If it was so bad, you'd think they would be out here in droves speaking to it. I guess they had their chance in the one-hour question period to come out and state their opinion when all the media was here, but when you debate a bill or when you truly believe in the argument or the fight you're standing for and you don't even have the support of your colleagues, that's really something.

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I must say I was talking to the president of the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce. His name is Dave Mendicino. He's a big supporter of business, a community leader in our city, and he had glowing remarks for the budget. He talked about how this government's going to continue with the tax cut for small businesses. I think we all recognize that small business drives jobs in the province of Ontario, especially in northern Ontario, where we need this job creation. Of course, this continuing tax cut for small businesses really helps them in that area.

You also have to talk about how this government has also cut the mining tax, which is really key to northern Ontario. It didn't back off. It said, "We believe in northern Ontario." I know that in my riding mining is very, very important. You think of Boart Longyear and those types of companies that employ a lot of people in our community. It's important that we support them. I think this government has taken that stance to show its commitment to the north. I believe it's very important. As we see declining population in the north, the one thing you have to look at is the fact that we have to create opportunities, job creation or opportunities for our young not only to be educated in the north, but to find jobs and stay

in the north. That's what the north truly needs. They need opportunities. I think this government has shown it has recognized the north does need some assistance and has taken steps that way. I think of individuals like Carl Crewson, who owns Plastitech, who employs 70 to 80 people and who exports most of his goods to the United States. These are key individuals in my riding who make it go, who employ people and create opportunities.

I must say, though, and I've only been here a month, I believe this party, the Conservatives, is the only party ever to have four consecutive balanced budgets. I think that's key. That just shows this government is responsible. It doesn't spend more money than it takes in. It shows that it needs to balance the books and it has made tough choices. There are groups, obviously, that aren't happy with everything this government has done, but they all state that at least this government is fiscally responsible and looks after the province. The four consecutive balanced budgets show this government is committed to governing this province the way any homeowner would run his household, the fact that you don't spend more money than you bring in because it just gets you in trouble. All hard-working families know that.

We have colleges and universities in northern Ontario. I think of the two that are in my riding, Nipissing University, whose president is Dave Marshall, and Canadore College, where the president is Barb Taylor. This government has not only put \$75 million more into post-secondary education; it has also committed another \$16 million for northern colleges and universities. I think that's very important. That shows a commitment to the institutions in the north, particularly in our riding. I was speaking with Dave Marshall and Barb Taylor. The funding is key, and I think this government has shown its commitment to that area.

One of the other things that we notice in the north, and you hear a lot of it in the news lately, is safe, clean drinking water. In my short period of time on North Bay city council, we were wrestling with the issue of water filtration, because we take our drinking water out of Trout Lake. Trout Lake is a very clean lake. It's a beautiful lake, but obviously with all the things that have happened in the province in the last couple of years, it's key that we set up protections for our citizens. I know that we wrestled with water filtration. This government is putting half a billion dollars into safe drinking water, and I think that's a great step. The city of North Bay wrestled with the costs of putting water filtration in; it was going to range anywhere from \$20 million to \$30 million. This investment by the provincial government will help cities like North Bay with this sort of situation. It can assist the city and the municipality to be able to deliver the water filtration at a cost that's more affordable for the community.

You talk about health care. It's probably the number one priority, the number one thing that is on most people's minds. In Nipissing we're building basically a \$200-million hospital, the North Bay Regional Health Centre. That's really key to any area or region and it's

key for my riding in the sense that when we talk about economic development, health care goes hand in hand with economic development. A \$200-million hospital is quite an investment. It's much needed in the north and it's much needed in my riding of Nipissing. That's quite a commitment from this government, to fund a little bit more than three quarters of that to provide first-class health care not only to the people of Nipissing, but to the people in the north.

This is the only government in 30 years that has opened a new medical school; the first time in 30 years, and they're opening it in the north. I think that's really key, the fact that we have our first medical school and it's being opened in the north. Statistics show that if you train doctors, they'll stay where they are trained. I think this is key and I applaud our government for doing this, the first time in 30 years we have a new medical school, and it's in the north. I think that shows a commitment by this government to northern Ontario.

Also, they've developed free medical school tuition for new doctors willing to practise in unserviced areas. That will be key to us as well; that will be key to the north. That is a strong signal to the people of northern Ontario that this government cares about the north. It has taken steps. It recognizes there is a physician shortage all over the world. It's not just an Ontario problem. This is a worldwide problem, and at least this government is taking the steps to assist northern Ontario in that sense. It's something that we all care about and we all want to see come to fruition.

There are many volunteers and community leaders in my riding of Nipissing going out and fundraising the community portion, their share of this new hospital. I applaud them, because it's a lot of hard work but it's very important. The people of Nipissing have always come out and supported any great cause. That's the one thing I love about the north and Nipissing, that they look after their own, and that's very important. That's why I'm very proud to call Nipissing my home.

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This government also recognizes that we need a strong transportation system, and it's aggressively four-laning Highway 11 from Toronto to North Bay. If you're driving up from Toronto to the north, the only way really to go is Highway 11. It's probably the most scenic route to go, and probably the safest route. But there's still a stretch that's two-lane. This government has recognized that for, safety reasons, when you're travelling in the north—it's not only for economic development, to transport goods to market; we also have to protect our citizens when they're travelling from the north to the south or the south to the north. On a four-lane highway, obviously, you're a lot safer than when you're on a two-lane highway. It's really something to drive up there and see all his construction going on.

It's former Premier Mike Harris, and now Premier Ernie Eves, who are driving all this development and have shown a real commitment to the north. I think that's quite an accomplishment and shows that for both those

men, their word means something. They make a promise and they keep it; it's not empty words. That's the one thing I've found about this party: it goes out on a campaign or stands up in the House and says, "We're going to do this," and they keep their word. Anybody of integrity realizes that the only thing you really have, at the end of the day, is your word. If you stick to your word, people will believe you. They'll have trust in you. They'll seek you out. They see that as leadership. I look at Premier Eves and he shows that leadership, and this whole party shows its leadership by keeping its word and working hard.

We talk about opportunities for the north. One thing we always struggle with up there is that it seems to cost more to live. You know, our roads don't last quite as long and our water and sewer lines don't last quite as long. This government recognizes that fact. They recognize that there are different interests in the north, different costs of living in the north. It has come up with the great idea of tax-free opportunity bonds for municipalities to build these infrastructures, to expand the services they provide to the community, to the city, through this tax-free opportunity that will lessen the cost to municipalities to raise money to put in this infrastructure. It gives the citizens, not just of communities in the north but all communities in Ontario, the opportunity to invest in their cities and receive tax-free bonds. The Ontario portion would be tax free; the federal government always takes their share. This province is willing to say, "Listen, citizens of Ontario, you're very supportive of your cities and towns. If you invest in them, we will create these opportunity bonds where we won't tax you." We'll allow you to invest into your communities and still get a rate of return," and, in turn, the municipalities can raise the capital necessary to keep their cities going, but at a lesser cost. I think that's a great thing that this government has come up with, which will assist not just all the municipalities in the north but throughout Ontario.

I look at individuals from my riding like Mike Anthony and Peter Chirico, great councillors with the city of North Bay, and Mike Holmes and Norm Pellerin, who sell real estate—and real estate is booming in Nipissing right now. Houses aren't even hitting the market without being sold. I can see good things happening for us in the north. We just need help in different areas.

I see community leaders like Paul Lamont, Greg Briggs, John Kreig, John Richardson, David Kilgour and Vala Monastine Belter—they are individuals who really believe in the north and in Nipissing. When I talk to them, they're saying that this budget, although some of the tax cuts were delayed a year—I mean, they're business people. They understand. You don't always have great years when you can just sock away a lot of money. Some years are a little leaner than others and you have to take steps. Sometimes you might have to move your priority one year because of things that have happened. I think it's good business sense that you do that. You just don't spend money you don't have.

When you postpone by a year a major purchase in your household because something happened—you needed some money somewhere else—that just makes good business sense. You don't just go out and borrow more money and get everything for the day and run a deficit in your own household. You just put off that priority for a year to allow yourself some room to concentrate on other areas in your household that might need attention. And that's the province; the province does the same thing. Obviously, we want to create more tax cuts or move ahead with those tax cuts that we had planned. But when you hear about health care and educational needs, I think this government took the right step. It said, "You know what? Let's delay those cuts one year and invest \$1.7 billion into health care"—that's an incredible amount of money, \$1.7 billion—and half a billion for education.

Now, you'll get organizations out there in both those fields that say, "That doesn't even come close to being enough." They need to say that; that's what they do. But still, if the taxpayers of Ontario are writing a \$1.7-billion cheque to health care and writing another cheque for half a billion dollars for education and writing another cheque for half a billion for safe water, I think they recognize that that's a lot of money and is an investment in the community of Ontario. They understand, "Hey, if this government and we feel that these are priorities, we'll forgo one year of tax cuts to invest all that money in those areas we need, and next year, when the province is doing that much better, then we'll take those tax cuts and put all that money back into our pockets." The average taxpayer in Ontario, who makes \$60,000—that's two workers, with two children—has put an extra \$2,000 in their pocket since this government has come into power. That's a lot of money.

In conclusion, I believe this budget is awesome. I believe this budget is triple excellent. I think what we saw in our finance minister, Janet Ecker, and our Premier, Ernie Eves—they did a tremendous job. I'm very proud to be on their team and very proud of this party and this government.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I certainly want to congratulate the member for Nipissing on his election victory and welcome him to the House. It was his maiden speech and I want to recognize that and congratulate him. It was a very narrow victory but well done.

I was in North Bay prior to the election campaign. A lot of people up there talked to me about what this government was doing with Hydro. He didn't touch on that. Hydro was an important part of this budget. In fact, the government—Janet Ecker—has booked \$2 billion that they expect to get from the proceeds of the sale of Ontario Hydro. When I was in North Bay, the people there were very much dead set against it, so I would ask the member opposite what he heard from his constituents about Ernie Eves and Janet Ecker and all the people he lauded. I've got to say, yes, it is the role of the opposition to criticize, to comment, to make constructive suggestions.

It's the role of backbench members to pat themselves on the back, and he did a very good job of that. My question to the member is, what did they say in North Bay about Hydro and the government's handling of it? It was very different from what you find in the budget here.

Another question that perhaps the member could answer—something that people in North Bay talked an awful lot about to me was Ontario Northland, this government's plans for Northland and their lack of support. There was no support for Ontario Northland in the budget, and I would be very curious about the member's comments about it. Does he support its continued operation, what is he going to do, and why is there no support for Ontario Northland in this budget?

A third comment, as the member talked about tax-exempt bonds: is he, as a former deputy mayor of North Bay, suggesting that the answer for municipalities and for municipal ratepayers is to incur more debt, to build up the debt? Is that what he is suggesting is the right way for municipalities to build and grow?

I'd be very interested in those answers.

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Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): First, I want to indicate that Tony Martin, the member from Sault Ste Marie, is anxious on behalf of his community, his region in the north of Ontario, to speak about this budget.

I can't omit making reference to the speech of the member from Nickel Belt, whose analysis in the brief hour given to her was outstanding. But I want this member who just spoke to be very cautious. He speaks of yet another balanced budget. Yes, it was just a balanced budget. However, let's understand how it got balanced. It got balanced because of the sell-off of public assets to the tune of approximately 1.8 billion bucks. What's this government going to do to balance the budget next year? Are they going to sell off the LCBO? And then the year after that they're going to sell off other assets, find more highways to sell: sell off the 406, then sell off the 400? Before you know it, there's nothing left to sell.

The interesting thing is that this government hasn't always had a preference for a balanced budget. Indeed they generated incredible amounts of debt, some \$20 billion, \$25 billion worth of debt to finance the tax cuts.

Interjections.

Mr Kormos: Wait a minute. That was on top of a substantial debt they inherited, a debt that was generated during a recession, during hard times, a debt that was generated in the early part of the 1990s that kept schools open rather than shut schools down, a debt that was generated that kept hospitals open, that kept transfer payments to municipalities, that built schools and built roads rather than shutting them down or privatizing them.

This government has increased the debt out of its passion for privatization and tax cuts. This isn't a balanced budget. This government had to sell the family silver to make the books turn out the way they did.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough Centre. I'm sorry; the Chair recognizes the member for Simcoe North.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Thank you very much, Speaker. I like being above Highway 7.

It's a pleasure to be here this evening. First of all, I want to comment and thank my colleague from Nipissing for his maiden speech, and what a great job he did on it. And I want to congratulate him on a victory in Nipissing. I don't know how many people are aware of this, but for the last 60 or 70 years, any time a Premier has left his seat in the province of Ontario the party in power did not hold on to that seat. In spite of the fact that the Leader of the Opposition spent about 28 days in Nipissing doing the very, very best he could to win that seat, the deputy mayor of North Bay won the seat, and I congratulate him for that—a job well done. Yes, we all heard the issues at the door, but we won the seat—the first time in I believe 70 years. That's a testament to AL McDonald, and I congratulate him for that.

Second, I want to comment on the budget that Minister Ecker delivered the other day, our fourth balanced budget. I'm so proud of this government, of the fact that in my four years here we've delivered four balanced budgets.

It was almost hilarious to listen to the member from Welland a few minutes ago talking about adding debt. The Common Sense Revolution inherited a debt of \$11.3 billion after the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party had accumulated something like \$60 billion in debt over a 10-year period. And he has the nerve to stand here and say we added to the provincial debt. It was part of the plan. There was no other way on God's green earth that we could have come to the position we're in now in the province of Ontario today without the Common Sense Revolution that we put in place.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I don't know whether the member has any constituents who would have been affected by the Mater's Mortgages situation. Mater's Mortgages investors, a number of years ago, invested in a company called Falloncrest. They're right across the province of Ontario, some in the Stony Creek area, some in various parts of the province. They have been in a legal battle with successive governments of Ontario for a number of years. I've met with these people on a number of occasions. A lot of them have become quite elderly because of the years that have passed. A lot of them were people who invested their retirement savings. Their contentious issue right now is that they believe the government of Ontario's lawyers are trying to stretch out the case so long that they will not be able to collect what they feel would be their rightful compensation.

Initially and to this day what I think they would prefer to have is an out-of-court settlement, one that they felt was fair to them, that compensated them appropriately for their losses and, they would believe, their interests as well. Their great frustration is that they've been tied up in court for years and years. The members they have contacted would remember how difficult that is for them to be caught up in court. They've incurred a lot of legal costs.

I'm pleased the Attorney General is here tonight to hear this because it's difficult for him. He is unable, I know, to intervene directly in legal cases. But it is my understanding that what these people have applied for now is mediation. They are prepared to go to mediation and to accept what the mediators would want. What they are hopeful of, and I support them in this, is that the lawyers acting for the government of Ontario would also enter into mediation. So I would hope the member would be able to speak to his friend the Attorney General and to others to try to persuade them to deal with mediation as opposed to dragging out the court case.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nipissing has two minutes to respond.

Mr McDonald: I have two minutes to respond regarding our budget. I heard the member for Don Valley East. I want to thank him for visiting the riding of Nipissing in the last month and a half. He actually came and introduced himself to me at the Davedi Club in the city of North Bay during spaghetti dinner, and I can tell you that if anybody wants a great spaghetti dinner, the Davedi Club is the place to come in the city of North Bay.

In this budget this government has invested an additional \$1.7 billion—that's "billion"—in health care, half a billion additional dollars in education, and half a billion for safe, clean drinking water. I think that's quite an investment in the province. I believe Premier Eves was listening. He said in the campaign that he would listen to Ontarians and that's exactly what he did.

It's the opposition's job to try to criticize the budget. I can tell you that the reason I think this is a triple-excellent, awesome budget was that the leader of the official opposition confirmed it in his interview. He confirmed that this budget was good for the province of Ontario. He did an interview on CKAT in the city of North Bay, and his exact words were, "This shows Premier Eves was willing to do anything to stay in power." In other words, the leader of the official opposition conceded that he did what the people of Ontario wanted him to do. I think that's a ringing endorsement from the leader of the official opposition to the Premier.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Caplan: I am pleased to speak on the budget. It won't be in the glowing and congratulatory terms of the last member. I have some substantive things to say about the budget.

It's important for the House to know how this plan is going to impact and, more importantly, how it doesn't improve things for the people of Don Valley East. I'm going to focus on five main areas: first, education—elementary, secondary and post-secondary, and specifically our special-needs children. I'm going to talk about health care. I'm going to talk about the plight of our elderly in community care access centres. I'm going to talk about our municipalities and the new deal for cities. Last but not least, I'm going to talk about affordable housing for tenants in Don Valley East and for all people across the province and what this budget does or does not do to address those needs.

On education, the key for parents, for educators and for students is that there's not enough money for the Toronto District School Board in my neighbourhood, and for the Toronto Catholic District School Board, to stop the major cuts that they have to make because this government has clawed almost half a billion dollars out of schools in the city of Toronto. So those cuts are going to happen, and they're going to be made to some critical programs. Let me give you a couple of different examples in Don Valley East.

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We have the international language program on Saturdays. Thousands of students participate every week. In fact, one school alone, the Mandarin school at Georges Vanier, has 1,400 students there on a Saturday. So from Mandarin to Macedonian, from Croatian to Farsi to Swedish, the list is endless of the thousands of kids who go to these programs. The Eves government is making it impossible for these programs to continue. These programs are important. They are an important way for our children to get together to share cultural activities, to learn a greater appreciation for their rich heritage and cultural background. These classes are important for our province as we try to maintain our international competitiveness. We have the ability to talk to literally anybody in the world, but the lack of support from the government has put this very much in jeopardy. We want our children and our communities to develop as multicultural, multilingual, cosmopolitan people and communities. So cuts to this program will make critical education and sharing impossible.

I had hundreds of parents attend a rally that I held at Georges Vanier a couple of Saturdays ago. We had 260 parents show up. They are disappointed. In fact, they have been sending reams of petitions to me telling the government that they disapprove of the actions, that the government did not provide the money that is necessary to help the boards avoid the cuts to this program.

I want to talk to you about school safety. I made a statement earlier today in the House about a survey that I did back in April in my riding. Most of the schools responded. We had a very high response rate. Their message was clear: schools are doing the best they can, given the resources they have been given. So they can communicate their safety plans to parents and students, but by no means do they have adequate staffing and resources to be able to make those plans and to be able to make our schools a safe haven where learning is going to take place.

Parents in Don Valley East were hoping to see some improvements in the budget to be able to address school safety needs. Parents at Broadlands school, Cassandra and Milne Valley wanted video surveillance in their schools. The staff at Seneca Hill, Senator O'Connor, Lescon, Brian and Donview Middle School don't have enough teachers, lunchroom supervisors, educational assistants and custodial staff to be able to provide adequate supervision at their schools. A simple request for additional lighting, same reason—they're not fulfilled

because of the inadequate education funding formula that Ernie Eves and his government have imposed across Ontario.

Instead of putting money into a constructive safe school plan that was brought forward by Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals, there was nothing. So parents, educators and students in Don Valley East are very disappointed that the government is not listening and is not willing to assist to make sure that our schools are a safe and secure environment.

We had a meeting in the post-secondary area about the double cohort. There was a real concern. I attended a meeting of over 400 students and parents at Victoria Park Secondary School arranged by Sue Lockington, the school council chair. Parents and students were concerned that the government hasn't prepared for the reality that's going to hit in a few short years. What do they see in this budget to alleviate their concerns? In a word, nothing. Sixteen million dollars to help northern and rural colleges and universities, but for students in my area and the greater Toronto area, nothing, despite the fact that most of the double cohort are students from the 416 and 905 regions. I know, Speaker, you're probably hearing these same kinds of concerns as well. There's going to be a new round of SuperBuild proposals to create some new spaces, but that's too late. I will talk a little bit about SuperBuild and what it has or hasn't done—a lot of grandiose announcements, but very little action when it's needed to make a real difference.

Parents and students know that the money in the budget is far less than what post-secondary institutions have advised the government they need. Remember, of course, that the government, when Ernie Eves was the finance minister, cut post-secondary education—his first act—by \$300 million, operating.

The college sector was calling for increased funding of \$125 million for 2003, and the universities were calling for an increase of \$151 million for 2003-04. The budget announcement of \$75 million was woefully short, woefully inadequate and will have a severe and direct impact on our kids who want to attend post-secondary, who are qualified, who are motivated, who will make a real difference. It's a real shame that they won't be able to. I know that the parents and students who attended that information session and rally at Victoria Park Secondary School are totally and wholly unimpressed.

I want to talk about special education because this is very near and dear to me, and I think all members of this House should be concerned about it. They're some of our most vulnerable kids. They need us. They need help, they need support, to reach the full potential of what they can be. The Minister of Finance disingenuously trumpeted in her speech that she's going to help assess students for special-needs funding. But what she wouldn't say is that there are thousands of students out there who are already assessed who can't get the help they need. So what's the point? We're going to assess you but we're not going to provide any support for you?

I want to quote an article that appeared in the *Globe and Mail*. It says, “I wasn't expecting much,” said

Theresa McNeil of Toronto"—Theresa is, in fact, a constituent of mine in Don Valley East; her daughter, Bernadette, has Tourette's—"whose child has a debilitating form of Tourette's syndrome and attends a Roman Catholic school" in Don Valley East. "About 40,000 children are waiting to be classified as sufficiently disabled," if that weren't offensive enough, "to warrant increased government support in the form of teaching assistance and special programs.

"The \$10-million amount may seem grand, Ms McNeil said, but does nothing to improve the lives of more than 200,000 children in Ontario already assessed" for special educational needs. The article goes on to say, "Those students will be as neglected under Mr Eves as they were under his predecessor, Mike Harris...."

"There's no doubt that children with special needs are expensive.... Today's money won't even touch our kids."

That's a real shame. That's from a parent in Don Valley East fighting for her daughter and for her daughter's education.

I want to talk about health care and community care access centres. I have some real concerns, and residents of Don Valley East do as well, that the government has missed the boat on health care, especially as it relates to our community of Don Valley East. There are no new initiatives or visions in the budget. Instead, they simply apply a funding patchwork to bring some of our institutions up to speed for the current fiscal year while leaving others behind facing increased challenges. Hospitals that serve Don Valley East—North York General, East General, Grace Hospital and Sunnybrook—have been asking for money just to cover their deficits. New money that has been announced in the budget will barely allow them to continue to provide the same level of service this year as last.

The budget announced \$200 million for the expansion of long-term-care facilities. I mentioned in the House the other day the long-term-care facilities associated with North York General Hospital. They have been waiting and waiting to open new beds, but the government won't provide the operating dollars—sure, capital, but no operating dollars. It means the residents are not getting the level of care they would like to be able to ensure that seniors are taken care of, because the government won't pay for the staffing that's needed. Facilities are losing trained staff to hospitals because they are not providing adequate resources to be competitive with what other like sectors are paying for nurses. So waiting lists get longer, terrific facilities are losing staff, and the situation is getting worse for seniors in long-term-care facilities. It's very disappointing.

I mentioned community care access centres. I'm really concerned that there was not one mention, not one, in the throne speech about the plight of community care access centres and care for our seniors living in their homes, living in the community. We all know that year after year we've been concerned about the deficits that have accumulated and are piling up. In Don Valley East, as in

other ridings in North York—and I see another member here from North York—the problems are very acute. The province, on average, aged 65 and older is about 12.5%; in North York, it's over 15%. That means we have 88,000 seniors in the North York catchment area, and the numbers are growing. Of those 88,000, of course, 36,000 are 75 years of age and older; that means increased pressure on the facilities in our neighbourhood to accept, house, care and help people live and have dignity and have a good quality of life. In North York, we have less than 3,000 long-term-care beds. It's not enough. There are not enough beds for our aging population, and ongoing cuts to community care access centres can't provide for them. No mention in the budget—again, a total disappointment.

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I want to talk about our cities as well, the plight our cities are having and the concerns they have. The government talked about its spending, but we need to look closely at what they're saying. The budget calls for \$193 million in new capital for public transit, through what they call a transit investment plan. But I have to wonder, because a mere eight or nine months ago, in September, the then Minister of Transportation, Brad Clark, announced \$9 billion over 10 years. Is this a change in plan? Is this a change in commitment? It wouldn't be surprising that the government says one thing and does something else and shortchanges the people of my riding and the people of Ontario, quite frankly. We've seen that happen before, all too frequently. So I'm very interested to know why this number is quite a bit less than what the government has committed to in the past.

Another cop-out from the province in the area of a new deal for cities: the budget says very specifically that there will be no new deal for cities unless, as a precondition, the federal government signs a new deal to give the province additional revenue. What a bunch of whiners you are. The finance minister comes in here with considerable new revenue in her budget and tells us, in fact, that they need more money. They could cancel some of their existing program of tax reductions; they've only deferred and delayed them.

So we need to be clear: there is nothing standing in the way of the provincial government to act on its own—no reason at all. As usual, we have the Conservative government of Ernie Eves trying to justify its inertia and lack of action and trying desperately to blame it on somebody else. Well, it's not going to work.

Of course, the last speaker from Nipissing talked about something they called tax-exempt bonds. Well, these have not been very warmly welcomed by municipalities, and there's no surprise why. Is debt really the answer? Allowing cities to go further and further into debt—that's the plan? You've got to be kidding. It should be quite the opposite—making it easier for municipalities to get out of debt, to build strong infrastructure, to build a strong program, to build strong services for their residents.

I have a column here from Jack Mintz, CEO of the C.D. Howe Institute. Here's what he has to say about tax-exempt bonds: "Tax-exempt municipal bond financing is one of those policies that would be better buried than praised." That's pretty damning. "Compared to other ways of financing municipalities, tax-exempt municipal bonds are a highly inefficient means of delivering support to municipalities." He goes on to get even more brutal here: "Tax-exempt municipal bonds, to the extent they benefit municipalities, only support municipalities that borrow money to finance their costs. Tax-exempt bonds therefore encourage municipalities to mortgage their future rather than reduce expenditures or raise revenues from existing voters. Fiscal mismanagement could be a rather unpleasant result when municipal bond financing is supported above all else." That's from Jack Mintz, CEO of the C.D. Howe Institute. Government members quote the C.D. Howe Institute quite a bit.

How did this get into the budget—more debt? Well, it's been the modus operandi of Ernie Eves in all his budgets to incur more debt in the province of Ontario. He just wants to mortgage the future.

I went to talk about some of the spending initiatives, so-called, that were in the budget. They announced money for water and sewer. I want to remind the House that those same dollars were promised back in August 2000, over two years ago. Culture and recreation money in the budget, also promised two years ago, August 2000—never spent; just recycled money over and over in an attempt to try to fool the people of the province of Ontario that this is somehow new.

How about the money to redevelop Toronto's waterfront? Announced in August 2000, budgeted in 2000—never spent. Again, it appears in another budget. Do they really think they're fooling anybody?

Finally, how about the much-lauded SuperBuild millennium partnerships? Members in this House should be really concerned that this money is being announced over and over. We've had recycled announcements more than anything else. One billion dollars in spending announced in 2000; \$4 million spent. Not one cent spent last year. Grandiose announcements, but the emperor has no clothes.

Let me talk very quickly about housing, a real concern that the government has no real commitment to affordable housing in Ontario. The tenants in my riding are very clear. They want the provincial government to be a true partner with the federal government. The federal government has come to the table; they've put \$250 million on the table. Ontario? Next to nothing—an absolute shame. It's disgusting the meagre amount that they are putting up of their own cash. They want to use municipal dollars and charities.

Finally, I couldn't let the occasion go by to talk about, because the members from the government won't want to talk about it, the Taxpayer Protection Act. I want to express some real concerns about the fact that the government is going to abrogate its own Taxpayer Protection Act. It's clear that the Taxpayer Protection Act is not

worth the paper it's written on. The Tories have abandoned it, even though a recession never happened in the province of Ontario. They've postponed their tax cuts; I think they should cancel them. After a brief economic slowdown in 2000, a return to 3% to 4% real GDP growth is projected in 2002-03.

I want to make it very clear: I support the act and I can't believe that the government members will stand by and support another broken promise to Ontario's working families and Ontario's taxpayers. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

This budget proves what Dalton McGuinty has been saying all along. Ernie Eves will do anything, say anything, to hold on to power. But after the election, watch out. He says one thing, he will do another. After six years of relentless cuts to our schools, to hospitals and to our environmental protections, Ernie Eves now wants us to believe that he's seen the light. He cannot be trusted. The only way to ensure permanent, positive change on behalf of the working families of Ontario is to elect a McGuinty government. That's what's going to happen a year from now.

The Tories received a \$1.1-billion bonus in the budget in growth beyond what they projected. There is no need for further tax cuts. The budget shows that Ontario's corporate taxes are already competitive with major US states. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals are the only ones with a true plan, the only ones with the courage, the conviction and the principle to say where they stand and to live by it.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to commend the member for Don Valley East for his speech tonight and for pointing out what are obvious signs in this budget that things have changed rather dramatically and drastically in this province, in particular the approach of the present government where the almost religious adherence to tax breaks and the shrinking of the public purse where the delivery of services is concerned shows up in this budget.

You can juxtapose that with the speech we heard a short while ago from the member for Nipissing and also throw in the wonderful speech that we had earlier from the member for Nickel Belt and begin to see where this debate and this discussion are going.

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It's interesting, because if you read any of the commentary on the debate, you'll understand that this discussion isn't limited to this place here. There is tremendous discussion beginning to happen out there across the province in our newspapers and, I dare say, because I haven't been home yet, in the coffee shops and restaurants and watering holes of my own community as people begin to wonder just what it is that the government is now up to. We've seen some radical shift, yet not the kind of shift that we would like to see, certainly in the third party, that indicates that the government really understands what has happened and what the last six or seven years under their leadership has imposed on this province.

Just one quick reference to an article by Sue-Ann Levy in the Toronto Sun of yesterday, where she's indicating that even the New York Times is beginning to refer to Ontario and Toronto as a community fraying at the edges.

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): It is indeed a pleasure to have an opportunity to comment on the speech by the member from Don Valley East. I've been in this place for three years now, and now I've seen some of the most absurd arguments in my life. These guys are standing up on the other side of the House with righteous indignation that we're talking about deferring taxes and how dare we open up the Taxpayer Protection Act, when these are the same folks who asked us to defer the taxes. But no, it's not simply defer the taxes. That's not good enough. They want us to cancel the tax cuts. Well, guess what? If we did what you wanted us to do, we'd have to open up the Taxpayer Protection Act for that too. You can't have that both ways. How can you stand there and cry out with righteous indignation, in such a sanctimonious way, that we're opening up this sacrosanct act when you want to cancel the tax cuts and you'd have to do the same thing? You can't cancel the tax cuts and not open the act. We're deferring them for a year, simply deferring them for a year.

I'm stunned. I don't know what planet these people live on. I can't understand how the official opposition can't realize that the economy has changed. They've been talking about it for nine months. "The economy has changed; you've got to stop this." So we did it. Now they're saying we're wrong.

Then they turn around and say, "You're the only ones doing this. You've lost all your principles." Well, let me look at this. The budget in BC—I'll send you a copy: increases in taxes, increased insurance. Alberta: for the first time in seven years they had to raise taxes. Why? The economy has changed. Get it through your head. There's a temporary situation happening right across the country. Every single province is doing this, and that's good government. Your righteous indignation is totally flawed and phony.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I'm delighted that I have the opportunity to say a few words, make a few remarks with regard to the comments made by my colleague the member for Don Valley East. I thought he made some very salient points on issues that are very important to the people in my riding relating to education, particularly the needs of special-needs students. I'm hearing from school board representatives and from families who are saying exactly what the member from Don Valley East has just shared with you, that there is nothing in this budget that gives them any assurance that the needs of their children are going to be better met since the delivery of the budget.

I also want to make reference particularly to the tax-exempt municipal bonds that the member referred to in his remarks as well. I regularly travel around and talk with municipal representatives through Hastings-

Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, and what the municipal folks ask me is, "What grants does the government have to help us with our highways that have been downloaded and to help us with some of our capital projects? Now we are responsible for fire protection throughout a much larger area. Our fire halls need upgrading. What grants are available to help us with these significant and onerous capital expenses?"

These are municipalities that don't have large assessment bases. In some of the municipalities 70% of the land is crown, so they don't even get taxes from a significant portion. The answer this government has given them is, "We don't have grants, but we're going to make it easier for you to go into debt. Just follow our lead. That's what we've done these last six years. We've put the people in the province of Ontario in deeper debt and you can do the same. This is how you can do it."

I'm very concerned, and I know that the folks in my riding are not going to be very happy when the best thing I can say to them is, "Well, I can give you a plan on how you can go deeper into debt."

Mr Kormos: If the Minister of Transportation wants some indignation, I'll give him some indignation. Just earlier this week, we've got two of Mr Eves's cabinet ministers complaining that their pension plans aren't luxurious enough. One of them, as a cabinet minister, is talking about how he needs a salary increase. Well, that makes me darn, outright indignant, because kids like Cameron Walsh—I told you about him earlier today; six years old—was diagnosed with autism three years ago when he was three. Two years ago, his folks, the Walshes, applied to have Cameron receive autism treatment under this government's autism program. Two years later, this kid, six years old, is still waiting. Those parents are now desperate for treatment for their six-year-old Cameron. They're paying \$2,800 a month, and they, for the life of them, have no idea where they're going to find those funds. And Ernie Eves has cabinet ministers who want to gold-plate their pension plans and increase their salaries.

Curtis Moore, another youngster—same boat, on a waiting list for years for autism treatment. His parents, for the life of them, don't know what they would do without the generous support of friends.

Oh, I've written to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. I wrote to her on April 22 this year on behalf of Cameron Walsh and his family. I wrote to her on June 7 this year on behalf of Curtis Moore and his family, trying to explain to this minister that she clearly hasn't got the clout or the interest at the cabinet table to ensure that there's funding for these autism treatment programs that are announced with oh, so much trumpeting and fanfare and ballyhoo. This government clearly prefers tax cuts to ensuring that children like Cameron and Curtis receive the medical treatment they deserve, that those youngsters surely have a right to. That's indignation, friend.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Don Valley East has two minutes to respond.

Mr Caplan: I want to thank the members for Sault Ste Marie, from Stoney Creek—the Minister of Labour—from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and from Niagara Centre for their comments.

It's clear that the government has lost its way. They don't know what they're doing. I heard this rant, this pusillanimous rant, from the member from Stoney Creek. It's really interesting.

We in the Liberal Party say we would cancel it. The Taxpayer Protection Act allows for that. If you campaign on a platform and tell the people of the province of Ontario precisely what you're going to do, the act says you can go ahead and do that. Now, if you say one thing and do something else, there's a word for that that I'm not allowed to use here in the House. But to try to sneakily get around that by amending your own act is the height of a government that has lost its way, that has no principles, that doesn't believe what it's doing.

Things have changed. Times have changed. You projected, I would say to all the members, a growth rate of 1.3%. In fact you have 3.1% growth. That's \$1.2 billion additional to the Ontario government treasury than what you were expecting to collect. So things have changed and you have to break the law to be able to account for the changes because you have more revenue than you thought you were going to get? Is that the bill of goods that this Minister of Finance, this Premier, the members opposite are trying to sell? Frankly, no one's buying what you're selling. You're out to try to sell the impossible.

Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals are the only ones who have a real plan for the province of Ontario, are the only ones with a firm commitment, with real principles and integrity.

Hon Mr Clark: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm just curious—it's been used a couple of times. The opposition have been clearly stating that the government is breaking the law. We're talking about amending an act. But I'm curious about whether or not using that exact terminology would be parliamentary.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order.

The Chair is looking now for further debate.

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Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I am pleased to be involved in this momentous debate on the 2002-03 provincial budget.

Three days ago, my good friend and colleague Finance Minister Janet Ecker tabled our fourth consecutive balanced budget for Ontario—the fourth consecutive balanced budget in Ontario hasn't happened in a very, very long time—keeping this government's promise of growth and prosperity for this great province of Ontario.

When she opened her budget speech, she used a quote from Charles MacNaughton, who was the Treasurer in 1967. Charles MacNaughton said that what a budget is is the government's ability to meet the reasonable expectations of the people of Ontario for services from their government. And you have to balance—I'm always amazed at how many times balance comes into the decision-making process—the reasonable expectation for

services for the people of Ontario with the burden that is placed on the taxpayer.

When you consider that as the subject of a debate, the reasonable expectation of services and balancing it off with the burden placed on the taxpayer, it certainly makes for fine fodder for a wonderful debate, and we have that. The opposition takes one side of that debate in various areas, the government defends their decision-making process, and ultimately the people of Ontario decide whether the government has done a good job or whether the opposition have made some good points. Tonight I'm extremely comfortable in what I think the people of Ontario are going to feel about this particular budget when it's presented to them.

This year's budget was about values and choices based on the principles of everyday Ontario taxpayers. These are values that have built this province and made it strong. Those values, those principles that Ontarians hold so dear—to live within your means, to work hard, to apply yourself, to contribute to your society—have built this province into one of the greatest jurisdictions in the world.

There is no doubt about it: the recent economic downturn has hit Ontario hard. After four consecutive years of annual real growth exceeding 5%—that's 5%, Mr Speaker—Ontario's economy grew by just 1% in 2001, and that was still higher than states that surround us in the United States, like New York, Ohio and Michigan. The Conservative policies that have created the ability—

Mr Kormos: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is a quorum present?

The Acting Speaker: Would you like me to check and see?

Mr Kormos: Yes.

The Acting Speaker: Would you check and see if there's a quorum present, please.

Acting Clerk at the Table (Mr Douglas Arnott): Quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Acting Clerk at the Table: Quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the member for Halton.

Mr Chudleigh: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'm glad my associates have joined us. This is an interesting debate.

Yes, our economic growth in 2001, although it was just 1%, was still higher than that of states like New York, Ohio, Michigan and other states in the Great Lakes valley. Our Conservative policies have created our ability to withstand downturns in the economy.

Some reference was made early on this evening about the recession of 1991, a recession which Ontario was the first to get into and the last to get out of, a recession that lasted fully three years in Ontario, unlike the economic slowdown we have just experienced. Ontario was the last to go into it and never really entered a slowdown period, although we suffered some reduction in economic growth. We were certainly the first to come out of it,

given the economic news we have had over the past couple of weeks.

Key building blocks of our economy such as the automotive and telecommunications equipment sectors have seen sharp reductions in demand in world markets. Nevertheless, this government will not allow Ontario to leave the path of prosperity. Quite frankly, we have come too far.

Unlike our predecessors, the Liberal and NDP governments, who preferred to carve a shrinking pie into even smaller pieces, the Common Sense Revolution, led by Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, chose to make that pie bigger. We're following that path of increased growth, because a growing economy provides more and better jobs, more disposable income and more revenue for the government to invest in future programs and in those services that Ontarians have come to expect from their government. In this budget, we've focused on the priorities of the people of Ontario, with major investments in health care, education and a clean, safe environment.

Let me take a moment to talk about some of the priorities we've invested in in health care. Having a universally accessible health care system that is available to all Ontarians when and where they need it is central to our quality of life and a key reason why people choose to live, work and raise a family in Ontario.

This Conservative government's record on health care speaks for itself. In 1995-96, health care spending was \$17.6 billion. This year it will be \$25.5 billion, which represents a 7.3% increase over last year alone. It represents a 44% increase since 1995. That 44% increase represents \$100 million per month for every month this government has been in power—\$100 million in increased spending each and every month. It's an enviable record. It's one that recognizes the needs of the health care system and the needs of Ontarians.

Our increased investments have made real differences. The number of MRI machines in Ontario has increased from 12 to 43. Some 20,000 new long-term-care beds are coming on stream. Ontario set up North America's first free, universal influenza vaccination program, providing five million doses annually.

In 2002-03, the commitment continues. We're improving cancer care by increasing funding by \$50 million over three years to enhance the Ontario Cancer Research Network. An additional \$40 million will be allocated to new treatments for individuals with cancer, and \$30 million to modernize and upgrade cancer radiation equipment.

Support for hospitals will increase to \$9.4 billion, allowing for the expansion of long-term priority programs such as cardiac services, dialysis and MRI scans; over \$250 million in additional funding for diagnostic services and payments to physicians and other practitioners; and nearly \$200 million to support residents in long-term-care facilities and to continue the expansion of long-term-care beds. Further, by 2005-06, \$50 million will be allocated to support the collaborative degree program in nursing education, and \$14 million will be allo-

cated to support the expansion of undergraduate medical school enrolment.

We are also specifically addressing health care in underserviced areas by moving forward with initiatives relating to physician and nursing shortages in northern Ontario and to the recruitment and retention of physicians and nurses in those areas, as well as the recruitment of nurse practitioners.

Finally, we are investing \$342 million for health capital, an increase of almost 70% over last year's budget. At the same time, we recognize that health capital dollars must be spent wisely. To that end, the government will commission a health capital planning review committee to make recommendations.

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Ontarians can rest assured that investments in health care will continue in the future as they have in the past. They can also rest assured that under the direction of our leader, Premier Ernie Eves, this government will continue to aggressively seek out the most effective and efficient ways of delivering these vital services.

Unfortunately, this is not enough. While Ontario and other provinces across Canada remain committed to health care, our major partner in health care funding, the federal Liberals, apparently are not committed.

Here are the facts: health care costs are rapidly increasing, as we've heard. The Ontario government's funding commitment to health care is also increasing—over \$100 million per month for every month since we've been in power. Meanwhile the federal Liberal contribution to health care costs is decreasing. It just doesn't add up. In 1994-95 the federal contribution to health care was 18% of cash transfers. Today it is down to just 14%, keeping in mind that when the Canadian Health Act started, it was 50%. This represents a shortfall of \$2 billion to Ontario in federal support for health care this year alone, and that's money the province could desperately use.

We remain willing to work with the federal government, other provinces and our health care partners to implement the needed reforms that will secure our health care system now and into the future.

Education is a major priority for the people of Ontario and our government. Through this budget we are helping students achieve better results by allocating more resources to the classroom and making major investments in post-secondary education. A quality education is fundamental to future prosperity, and excellence in education is the key to ensuring that every young person in Ontario has equal access to opportunity, no matter where he or she lives.

People are telling us that public education has to improve and we are listening. Since 1995 we have been putting in place a plan to improve student learning and achievement. The plan is working, but there's much more to do. That is why the Premier announced in the spring an additional \$65 million for school boards to purchase new textbooks and learning materials for students. That is why we also provided a \$25-million investment for

2002-03 to expand the highly successful early reading strategy from grades 3 to 6, and to introduce an early math strategy from junior kindergarten to grade 3. That is why funding for special education has increased by 17% since 1998-99 to \$1.4 billion, a record for this province. That is why, for the 2002-03 school year, available funds for the public education system through direct transfers from the province and educational property tax revenues will rise to a record \$14.3 billion. This is an increase of nearly \$400 million over last year.

Other initiatives in this budget that focus on school improvements and higher education achievements include a \$20-million student achievement fund to provide \$5,000 to elementary schools that meet or exceed their student performance improvement targets; one-time funding of \$10 million to develop further professional learning resources for teachers and principals; a further \$5 million to expand the early math strategy to grade 6 and enhance the teaching skills of elementary school math teachers; an additional \$10 million to enhance access to intensive support amount assessments.

It's important as well that students have a safe place in which to learn. For that reason our budget also proposes a number of initiatives to upgrade and repair school facilities, making them safe and secure for our most precious resource, our children and our leaders of the future.

Competing in a global, knowledge-based economy means post-secondary education is central to our future prosperity. In anticipation of increasing post-secondary participation and the arrival of the so-called double cohort, we invested over \$1 billion to create over 73,000 new student spaces in our colleges and universities through the SuperBuild program.

This is the largest infusion of capital dollars since the Robarts and Davis governments created Ontario's modern post-secondary education system. This government remains committed to ensuring that every willing and qualified Ontario student will have a place in the post-secondary education system.

In support of this commitment, the 2002 Ontario budget proposes to increase last year's multi-year funding for colleges and universities by \$75 million, raising the additional funding to \$368 million by 2003-04 to support greater than anticipated enrolment. We also will provide \$10 million annually in additional operating funds to northern and rural colleges. Also, we will support Ontario's northern universities with an additional \$6 million annually, which includes the two new medical colleges in Thunder Bay and Sudbury.

A new college equipment and renewal fund is being established that over the next five years will provide \$50 million to colleges to acquire state-of-the-art equipment and learning resources.

We will be consulting on the design of the second phase of the Ontario student opportunity trust fund so that it can assist 400,000 students attending colleges and universities over the next decade. These will be the leaders of our industry and businesses in Ontario—really, the leaders of our future.

This budget supports apprenticeship through a further investment of \$5 million this year, rising to \$25 million by 2005-06.

These are just some of the important investments in our education system that this government believes are essential to our future prosperity.

Finally, I'd like to address our other top priority: a clean, safe and healthy environment. This government is committed to ensuring that Ontario has the toughest policies in the world for safe, clean drinking water, and we will dedicate whatever resources are required to accomplish this goal. Following the tragic events at Walkerton, the government took immediate steps to improve water safety, including \$18 million for Operation Clean Water.

On Monday, Finance Minister Janet Ecker announced a commitment of over half a billion dollars in the next two years to clean and safe drinking water for the people of Ontario to meet that promise of the cleanest drinking water anywhere in the world.

In 2002-03 we will invest a further \$245 million in initiatives, such as help for municipalities to upgrade their water systems to meet the tough new standards and improve their waste water systems. We are providing funding to more than double the number of municipal water system inspectors. We are establishing the \$50-million Clean Water Legacy Trust and the Clean Water Centre of Excellence in Walkerton. Groundwater studies and new environmental and water monitoring equipment are also part of that program.

We are also committed to clean air. This budget proposes incentives for using innovative technologies and renewable forms of fuel. We propose to extend the sales tax rebate for hybrid-electric automobiles to cover sport utility vehicles and light trucks equipped with this technology. We are also proposing an exemption from the 14.3 cents per litre fuel tax for bio-diesel fuels. The Drive Clean program will also be expanded in July to cover all of southern Ontario's smog zone.

Another initiative to improve air quality in urban areas is the government's \$193-million transit investment plan. To further ensure Ontarians high quality of life, public transit will be expanded and enhanced with the renewal of municipal bus fleets.

The challenges we successfully faced over the past year would have been much worse without the early growth resulting from this government's plan and our focus on what matters most to the people of Ontario.

By choosing to focus on priorities, this government has been able to build a strong economic foundation that encourages growth and prosperity for all of Ontario, just as we promised we would.

In 1995 we brought fiscal responsibility to the province of Ontario and we have continued with that fiscal responsibility in every budget we have introduced since, including this one. Prudent fiscal management has brought job growth to Ontario, over 800,000 new jobs—the fastest job growth in Ontario history. Whether it's a specific number of jobs or whether it's a percentage, it's the fastest job growth in Ontario history.

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Those jobs have been created out of new businesses, out of expanded businesses, out of businesses that have grown at unprecedented rates. That growth has created further revenues for the province of Ontario, allowing us to reinvest those revenues in areas the people of Ontario expect to have services from. We've reinvested in health care—as I mentioned before, over \$100 million a month for each and every month we've been in government. We've reinvested in education to ensure that our children in the future are educated at a global standard with the ever-expanding need in the world for education.

It's a wonderful budget, and I'm proud to be part of a government that would bring this down.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Bradley: I just got off the telephone with an individual who has a problem, and I wonder if the member is aware of anything in the budget that might address this.

This individual and his wife are over 50 years of age and have a disabled son whom they look after; they keep their disabled son at home. What they've had announced is that of the 12 hours of home care they can receive for him, four hours have been cut back, so they're now down to eight hours of home care for that individual. I'm wondering if the member, when he was going through the budget or perhaps through some briefing he's received, could help us out by letting us know if there is anything that will address this problem.

There are individuals in our communities who look after people in their families. In this case, the people aren't elderly. They're over the age of 50, but they aren't elderly. There are many people now who are in their 70s and 80s who are looking after disabled people—they may be physically disabled or developmentally disabled—and they are taking on an obligation to look after them.

We recognize that if these people were institutionalized—in other words, put outside the home setting and into a home—it would probably cost \$75,000 a year to address their needs. Instead, they've willingly taken on the obligation to look after their own children and unfortunately have had a cutback announced in the number of hours. Those hours are essential, because it is extremely stressful for parents, particularly as they get older, to look after these people who are disabled and have many, many personal challenges they must meet. Virtually everything has to be done for some of these individuals—through no fault of their own, quite obviously—and the parents have taken on this obligation. If they don't have that relief, if they don't have that home care, it's very difficult for them to continue, and it's heartbreaking when somebody has to be put in a home, both for the person who goes into the home and for the parents. So I'm wondering if the member is perhaps aware of something in the budget I haven't seen that would address this problem.

Mr Kormos: That's an interesting tack by the member from St Catharines. Indeed, I put to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services, who is here, if she would stand during the course of this budget

debate and explain where the modest amount of funding is for Curtis Moore, the child I talked about earlier who has autism and who has been diagnosed and deemed eligible for the treatment program. But, you see, there's no funding left for the treatment program down in Niagara. So here's a youngster who has to wait years to access this government's much-touted and fanfare autism treatment program.

I wrote to the minister about that on June 7, 2002. Granted, it wasn't in time for her to make a contribution to the budget process, but here is the case of Cameron Walsh, a 6-year-old diagnosed with autism when he was three and on a waiting list for two years, whose parents in desperation—and they haven't got the slightest idea where they're going to get the money—have commenced private treatment to the tune of \$2,800 a month.

So where, Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services, if you ever did care about these kids, is the money in the budget to ensure that these two children, along with scores of others in Niagara region alone, get the treatment for their autism that they deserve? Just how hard did you fight? You can't even show any enthusiasm now while I'm speaking about them. Surely you, Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services, showed no enthusiasm about them when it came to making your contribution to the budget, because there's not a penny for those kids.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): It's a pleasure for me to respond to some of the comments made by my colleague from Halton. I too agree with him that it is a reasonable and prudent budget for the taxpayers and the constituents of Ontario; however, there's no doubt that I, as a member representing a certain riding in southwestern Ontario, am somewhat disappointed. I do fundamentally believe that the tax credit for independent schools and Christian schools—the credit was delayed for one year—is an issue I'm going to continue fighting for, because I strongly believe—

Mr Kormos: Where's the money for kids with autism?

The Acting Speaker: The member for Niagara Centre, come to order.

Mr Beaubien: However, I would like to respond specifically to the member from St Catharines and the member from Niagara Centre. If those two members were to read the budget, I would strongly suggest—

Mr Kormos: Where's the money for kids with autism?

The Acting Speaker: The member for Niagara Centre, come to order.

Mr Kormos: Where's the money for kids with autism?

Mr Beaubien: —if you just give me a minute, here's \$25 million, and I quote right from the—

The Acting Speaker: Member for Niagara Centre, you've had your turn. It's somebody else's turn.

The Chair recognizes the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Mr Beaubien: On page 29, it says \$27 million—

Mr Kormos: Where's the money for kids with autism?

The Acting Speaker: Order. I'll not warn the member for Niagara Centre again.

The Chair recognizes the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Mr Beaubien: Thank you, Speaker. On page 29 of the budget—

Mr Kormos: Where's the money for kids with autism?

The Acting Speaker: Order. I'm naming the member for Niagara Centre, Peter Kormos.

Mr Kormos: Where's the money for kids with autism?

Mr Kormos was escorted from the chamber.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has about a minute, and I'll keep track of it.

Mr Beaubien: I go back to the budget speech. On page 29 it stipulates "\$27 million annually to provide specialized programs and services to help children with a combination of physical, developmental, behavioural and psychiatric disabilities whose complex needs are not being fully met within their communities." Furthermore, to reply directly to the member from St Catharines, there's "\$114 million this year to provide respite care for families caring for high-needs children and for parents caring for adult sons and daughters with developmental disabilities."

It's nice for the opposition to say, "Where is the money?" I would strongly suggest that if these members had read the speech and if they had read the budget, the answer is right in front of them.

Mr Caplan: The member from Halton didn't touch on the most important point, and that's, where does Ernie Eves stand? What does he stand for? This budget is a total contradiction of the actions over the last six years. It's clear that Mr Eves and his government have no conviction, no principle, no integrity. You can't trust Ernie Eves.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Halton has two minutes to respond.

Mr Chudleigh: Health care in this province has been and continues to be a priority. When you invest over \$100 million per month for every month that we've been governing this province, for a \$7.9-billion increase, that speaks volumes as to our commitment. Our commitment to health care in this province is second to none.

The member for St Catharines, the member for Niagara, the member for Don Valley and the member for—

Mr Beaubien: Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Mr Chudleigh: —Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and a whole bunch of other places—Petrolia; that's the member from Petrolia—

Mr Beaubien: Capital of the world.

Mr Chudleigh: —capital of the world—all spoke about needs in health care. As was pointed out, there's \$27 million in new care and \$114 million for respite care.

These are areas of the health care system that are needed in any caring society, and we're meeting those needs in this budget. We're making the investments that are necessary. We're recognizing that Ontarians are committed to their families, to their children, to the people in need in their communities. This budget has recognized that. It's a fiscally responsible but caring budget that balances very nicely, I believe, the burden it places on the taxpayer with the expectations Ontarians have come to expect from a fiscally responsible government.

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The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I'm pleased to have an opportunity to join the budget debate 2002. Recognizing the lateness of the hour, I will begin my remarks tonight and conclude them next time.

I was struck when the minister began her speech the other day with her emphasis on values—the values of hard work and enterprise, the importance of public service—and her emphasis on the importance of small business. As the member for the Ottawa Valley, I thought I would take a few minutes tonight and, against the backdrop of Minister Ecker's understandable emphasis on those values, pay tribute to an extremely important and successful small business in my county, in my constituency, that tomorrow will celebrate its 100th anniversary.

It was on June 20, 1902, that the first edition of the Eganville Leader was published in the heart of the Ottawa Valley. One hundred years later, it remains a vibrant, remarkable, highly respected, indeed authoritative journal of public opinion in our part of eastern Ontario. Over those 100 years, the Eganville Leader has had but two owners. In the beginning, from 1902 to 1944, it was owned by Mr Patrick McHugh. In 1944, Mr McHugh sold his paper to Ambrose and Sylvester Tracey of Eganville. Today, the paper is owned and operated by the two sons of Ambrose Tracey: Mr Ronald and Mr Gerald Tracey.

I just simply want to, in this budget speech, pay tribute to Ron and Gerald Tracey and their excellent and dedicated staff who produce, I can say quite honestly, one of the very best newspapers not just in the province of Ontario but in the Dominion of Canada. It is truly a family-owned newspaper that is obviously and deeply rooted in the community of the Ottawa Valley.

I want to take a moment tonight and just for the record reflect on what Mr McHugh and the Eganville Leader set out to do when that first edition was published on Friday, June 20, 1902. Let me quote from that first edition:

"Today, the Eganville Leader makes its initial bow to the public, and seeking its favours and goodwill, takes its place in the ranks of journalism. The Leader enters the field as the result of a demand of a large and influential portion of the public—not confined to local boundaries—for a journal that is 'bold enough to be honest and honest enough to be bold'; a paper that shall ever endeavour to conserve the rights of its constituents and be ready and prepared to champion any cause in keeping with their aims and aspirations."

Mr McHugh makes plain in that first edition that he was not going to be one of those independent voices in terms of the political question. Reading from that first editorial published June 20, 1902, let me continue:

"In the realm of politics the Leader takes its stand on the side of independent Liberalism. The course pursued by those journals which do not espouse any party or cause, but sit complacently on the fence, reaching out to either side for any passing favours, has never appeared to us as consistent with the true functions of the press. We believe in exercising the right of expressing an honest opinion on those questions which from time to time engage the attention of the public mind."

As a local member and long-time subscriber of this wonderful newspaper, let me just reflect on what, in that first edition, 100 years ago tomorrow, Mr McHugh imagined for the future. He says:

"We feel sanguine that the future shall see this latest addition to the ranks develop and grow, and as the years roll by the sphere of its influence shall extend far and wide until the goal of its ambition is reached—a Leader in the ranks and a living force in the promotion of good and the suppression of evil."

In eastern Ontario today, and in much of the country, we're having quite a debate about the role of the press. If you live in my part of the province these days, you cannot avoid what's going on with the Ottawa Citizen—a great, understandable controversy about the role and ownership of a supposedly free press in a living and breathing democracy. I think we ought to be concerned about what's happening with many of our print media these days—not just print, I suppose, but electronic as well.

I want to say tonight, in the spirit of Ms Ecker's values, which she said undergird her budget and with which she grew up in her part of Huron county, it is hard for me to imagine a more truly representative and successful representation of all that is really good about Ontario than the Eganville Leader, which tomorrow will celebrate its centennial.

This budget talks about September 11 and what impact it had on the budgetary and fiscal policy of this province in this past year. I wish I had in my hands the edition of the Eganville Leader that was published the week of September 11. It was a remarkable effort for a small-town weekly newspaper—extraordinary. It's just symptomatic of the tremendous work that Ron and Gerald Tracey and their excellent staff do, not just in terms of editorial and news gathering but in photography, that is first-class—a tremendous credit to the Ottawa Valley, to Ontario and to powerful and positive journalism at that level.

As the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I want to say to the Eganville Leader, to Ron and Gerald, to the late Patrick McHugh and certainly to Ambrose and Sylvester Tracey as well, you have done what you set out to do in a very splendid and successful way. May the next 100 years bring you an equal measure of success and progress.

On budgetary matters, as the hour draws quite late, let me make some other observations. I was pleased to see Ms Ecker's two parliamentary assistants, named Beaubien and Chudleigh, stand tonight and say they approve of the budget that their boss presented here two days ago. I am very pleased to know that the members from Halton and Lambton, parliamentary secretaries to the Minister of Finance, approve in general of the budgetary policy of their boss, our friend the member from Pickering.

It is an interesting budget. I have been struck by many of the comments made, and tonight in my remaining time I want to talk about three things: highways, hydro and municipalities.

But I want to ask my colleagues, if they have a copy of the budget papers, to turn to pages 62 and 63, because I'm struck by that 10-year chart. One just has to look at the revenue chart of this provincial government of ours to see that we really are a robust and powerful economy. According to this budget plan, this year we will have revenues of somewhat in excess of \$66.5 billion, and we plan to spend \$65.5 billion of that. We have been really growing revenues at a very substantial rate.

Mr Chudleigh just a moment ago was talking about how pleased he was with the rate at which his Conservative government is spending that money, and we certainly have been spending it. Program spending in this province over the last seven years has risen from about \$46 billion in fiscal year 1995-96 to something in the range of \$55 billion in this current fiscal year. Much of that spending has been made possible by very powerful growth. That's a good thing and I'm not here to complain about it.

What is interesting about the last 12 months is that one sees what happens when growth goes from the supercharged level, as Mr Chudleigh rightly observed, of in excess of 5% in real terms down to around 1%. I'm not at all surprised we've got the Minister of Finance saying, "We'll have to delay those tax cuts," because I'm going to tell you, the kind of tax-cutting that has been going on here of late has been made possible largely by an above-average annual rate of growth. And I will say, as a member of a government that was once in office when we too had very robust annual growth, much better than we expected, those are really happy times.

Fiscal 2001-02 brought us a different reality. Happily, we have quickly emerged from that and we're headed back into 3% and 4% growth, apparently, over the next year or two. But I'll tell you, these fiscal plans, with all the tax-cutting contained therein, which tacitly assume annual growth rates in real terms of 4%, 5% and 6%, are very, very optimistic. I suppose the good news for the current government is that they're probably going to get through the next election cycle with above-average, as opposed to below-average, rates of growth.

With that, Mr Speaker, I will adjourn the debate.

The Acting Speaker: It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 2130.

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Thursday 20 June 2002

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 20 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 20 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 20 juin 2002

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I move the resolution, which reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should:

Implement a comprehensive and effective training and retraining strategy relevant to today's economic and social needs;

Better utilize public and private institutional resources in order to rectify the ever-increasing learning gap;

Become an advocate on behalf of apprenticeship programs and remove barriers in areas of fees and access to such programs;

Initiate and crystallize a new relationship with other provincial jurisdictions and the federal government in order to better harness skills and training information and innovation and establish agreements to eliminate cross-order barriers;

Develop and implement cogent and comprehensive policy in areas of recognition of foreign credentials, transparent certification procedures, increased funding and programs of professional retraining for foreign-trained professionals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Scarborough-Rouge River has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Curling: Thank you for this opportunity to debate very important subject. The main goal of this resolution is to connect the importance of skills training, retraining and lifelong learning, and to outline the important social and economic benefit that an effective training strategy as in Ontario.

This connection of issues has been the anchor of many serious studies and reports. It is time for all of us to take this very seriously. It's imperative that we recognize the role of an active and responsible government in articulating this benefit. I reach out to you today on this most important matter so we can build a consensus, an understanding, a partnership. It is time for a new contract.

With this in mind, now is the time to crystallize an action-oriented policy. It is time for leadership. In order

to have a comprehensive and effective training strategy, there are points of principles that we need to establish. What we need to establish is a training culture. What we need to advance is literacy awareness.

A training culture encompasses a change of attitude whereby we begin to interconnect the transformations in our society and economy. When we focus on training, we focus on people. And when we focus on people, we start from the beginning—the beginning of learning, literacy, skills development, training, education and apprenticeship. They are all interdependent; not one single aspect can function alone. The link between learning and society is training, and it is here where we sow the seeds of training culture.

In addition to a training culture, we need to be very serious about literacy awareness. Functional illiteracy is among us and is rampant. In Ontario, 20.2% of the adult population do not have basic literacy skills, while a further 24% would be considered to have inadequate skills to function in our society today, not to mention their inability to meet changing labour market needs. But it is not merely about numbers; it's about bringing dignity to people and worth in knowledge and understanding.

We need to refocus and reconfirm our commitment to the early development of literacy skills, in both children and adults. We need to develop a lifelong connection to languages and to ideas that invite exploration by eager young minds and willing adults.

We need to become advocates. Advocacy carries with it responsibilities, conviction and leadership. This must be done in a manner whereby apprenticeship initiatives are respected and connected to the economy and to society. It's imperative that such advocacy become a central and positive theme in the larger training strategy.

Skilled trades are honoured traditions. We must be vigilant in our efforts in recognizing and appreciating that those entering such fields receive all the support, the appropriate tools and proper funding for today's modern economy. For that to happen, we need to eliminate the barriers that currently exist and improve access to apprenticeship programs at large.

Disincentives are high: high tuition fees; smug recognition of several trades; remarks you hear from time to time that those who can't make it academically can go into apprenticeship. Streaming is another disincentive that we have in our society.

Most importantly, it is essential that we clarify the confusion about the many programs that are currently in play, so as to identify their roles and meanings. Clarity is

key to comprehension. Clarity and connection are key to a strategy. When we clarify the roles that colleges, universities, unions, businesses, professional associations and training institutions play, then we are better able to position and coordinate in a constructive manner the programs that currently exist.

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By doing this, we properly assist those entering skills training to visualize the direction and path to be taken. This is especially important to students in high school who want to choose a career path for skilled trades but do not receive relevant strategic counselling and information. When we eliminate the overlapping confusions, then we are better positioned to become true advocates.

Another acute challenge facing us is meeting and matching the skills needs today, from all sectors, for tomorrow's economy and society. The larger issue is that Ontario faces a severe skills shortage across all trades, from plumbers to electricians, drywallers, IT specialists, pharmacists and nurses, and that's just to mention a few.

Now we enter what we call a very important theme: the brain gain. The fundamental objective for us to constructively and dynamically move away from the so-called and over-dramatized brain drain phenomenon and tap into the brain gain reservoir. The brain gain reservoir is in our own backyard. It is the many talented and educated foreign-trained professionals.

The province of Ontario has thousands of foreign-trained professionals who, for many reasons, are unable to practise in their designated fields. This fact has a severe social and economic impact on both individuals and the economy of Ontario. To impose unnecessary and injurious barriers is inhumane and contravenes any serious attempt at solving these shortages. Also, it is irresponsible to build walls around those who pursue a noble educational and career path.

It is estimated that this underutilized, underemployed job talent costs Canada over \$2 billion per annum. The underutilized skills would benefit Ontario through economic growth and fill the current and potential skills shortages. Also, it would benefit local communities with their economic strategies and employment needs.

On the social benefit, it builds strong family values, establishes a sound foundation and brings dignity and pride and respectability to the family. The family would then be able to focus on the strong benefits of education and skills. Parents lose the respect of their children due to the way society has treated them. It does not recognize their skills, and they lose face in their family.

In other words, if we do not tap into this knowledge reservoir, we'll have a brain waste.

The regulatory bodies need to recognize their social and economic responsibilities by expediting the accreditation process and opening up the professional bodies. They are the gatekeepers to the professions. There seem to be too many obstacles in the way to achieve recognition.

A key role for the regulatory association is advocating on behalf of the potential professionals. They must also

support programs such as ESL and other support systems from the government that need to be sustained and expanded. They must standardize acceptance of accreditation and recognition of foreign degrees and experience and foster willingness to remove visible and latent barriers that exist.

Essentially, the assessment and recognition of the education of foreign-trained workers is grossly neglected and is an issue of growing importance in Ontario and in Canada as a whole.

At this point, I'd like to recognize organizations such as the World Education Services, OCASI and others who continually remind us that as a society and an economy we pay a heavy price for the non-recognition of immigrant credentials. In fact, they have put out a challenge—and I will today echo this challenge to Canadian and Ontario employers—to recognize the value of foreign-trained, skilled workers and professionals who today are citizens of this country and residents of this province.

Governments also need to recognize their responsibilities by way of constructive, well-funded programs, by being the centre of relevant and coherent information, and being a true leader in institutional building.

More important, they must become involved, when advising potential immigrant applicants, with honest expectations of the system in Ontario and in Canada as a whole. It is one thing to lure potential professional applicants to come to Canada and Ontario. However, it is another not to fully inform and guide them about the possible barriers they might face. Canada must be honest with applicants overseas, as it must be honest when they are here.

We hear about Canadian experience, that many people have come here and haven't worked. It is in our interest to do so, and it is our honourable and moral duty toward new Canadians. The private sector, the businesses that benefit most from these professionals, also needs to take a leadership role and become part of the solution. An accurate understanding and evaluation of the skills knowledge and experience of foreign-trained worker plays a role in enabling these workers to find jobs in which this preparation can be used to full advantage.

I'm reminded of the many and over-used anecdotes We can see that many foreign-trained professionals are not being utilized fully. I hope my colleagues here will support this resolution.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): It's my honour and pleasure to be here this morning and to listen to my colleague and friend the member for Scarborough-Rouge River, who I think during his tenure in this position, committed his very best efforts. We hope to do the same and improve upon them. Of course I'll be supporting this resolution this morning.

Ontarians should have an opportunity to work and develop their skills in their own communities. He, as I do, believes in province-wide access to leading edge apprenticeship and training programs. We believe in providing the best possible opportunities for skilled workers, apprentices, adult students and job seekers.

I came to this place in 1988 as a former chair of the London Board of Education because I cared very much about apprenticeship training, and I'm very pleased and honoured to have this job now where I can get right in on the front lines and work, as my colleague did when he had the job, in the interests of our young people, our economy and our workforce.

In this week's budget, as in the past, we've announced that we'll make further investments in apprenticeships of \$5 million this year, rising to \$25 million by 2005-06. There's been an announcement every year for the last five years. We believe in a made-in-Ontario apprenticeship training system.

Skills training is an important factor in economic growth. Goldfarb's study of the views of international investors said that "the most important resource which many companies consider when making investment decisions is the availability of skilled labour." This is a problem all over the world, but we have an opportunity in Ontario to inspire our workforce and we're going to do it and provide opportunities for them.

We are very proud. It's a major selling point for new investment. Traditionally our province has the highest percentage of workers with post-secondary education in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. We know that 35% of our young people go on to post-secondary education, but just as important is to get the right programs so that those who do not and those who do will get into the skilled workforce, because that's where we need them.

We need more education and more skills to give our workers a wider range of opportunities for work and greater confidence to adapt to change. Trained workers are also more likely to upgrade their skills throughout their careers and that's the story of this next generation—upgrading. Technology does in fact get ahead of us.

But demographics is not on our side. We know that fully one third of Canada's workforce will be in a position to retire by the end of the decade; that's from the TD Bank. Last February the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reported that the demand for skilled workers is the highest it's been in the last 25 years.

There have been layoffs in the information technology industry. However—this is for young people; it's for the workforce as a whole—the industry still expects that its demand for skilled workers will exceed the current supply. The Information Technology Association of Canada estimates that 9,900 jobs will go vacant by the end of the year.

As early as 2010 all workers and job seekers will be competing in a job market where work is more complex and where employers demand higher levels of skills and training. This change will accelerate to the point where it's expected that half of the jobs people will have in 15 years will require skills to operate technology that is not yet invented.

What a challenge, especially when you realize that more than half of the people who will make up Ontario's workforce in 2015 are already working. That means these

workers have completed what we traditionally consider their education. My colleague is absolutely right. Training is lifelong. It's more fun that way, but it's certainly more productive.

We have three challenges: help new entrants into the workforce get the basic skills to find and keep a job; ensure that existing employees have access to the workplace-based training they need to remain relevant in an increasingly technological world, and that's why we're doing our journeyperson updating; replace a significant portion of our leading managers, professionals and highly skilled workers as they retire—and this means young people, when they go into these trades, could be entrepreneurs but will be managers much sooner than we were.

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We've developed a coordinated strategy for training, and that is developed in partnership with our businesses, our trainers, our unions, our students, our schools.

Job Connect—a great success story right here in the preparation programs in Canada. Some 85% of these people that are part of this program go back to school or get jobs, and we track it. This is one complaint I have with regard to our federal colleagues: we're not certain that they keep results. What we do get is that only 50% of their basic programs are successful, and that's not good enough.

Working with my colleague the Minister of Education, we're focusing on our high school students with more opportunities to learn about careers and have first-hand workplace experience before graduating from high school.

We listen to industry. We passed legislation that provided a more accountable framework for training skilled workers. We do intend to double the number of people entering apprenticeship programs. We intend to continue to work with our colleagues.

On Monday morning I was at the St Thomas campus of Fanshawe College. It's providing pre-apprenticeship training for people intending to be apprentice general machinists.

As you know, we're focusing on women in skilled trades and women in technological training.

The apprenticeship enhancement fund is a piece that supports that program in Elgin to support precision machine cutting training. This is updated under the apprenticeship enhancement fund.

There is so much that we are continuing to do. I'd like to talk about the Ontario youth apprenticeship program. We could go on to talk about our access to apprenticeship training, to literacy and basic skills—which my colleague and I have both been focused on during our entire lives—to adjustment services for people, getting more foreign-trained workers into the workforce faster—"bridging programs" we call those—for people with international training, as well as our summer jobs. We have programs right now for people who have come to Canada that get them into the nursing profession and the pharmacology profession very quickly, but that's because the nurses and the pharmacists are working with us.

I'd just like to conclude by asking my colleagues across the House to assist us in our efforts to provide a labour market development agreement with our federal government. It would give us almost \$600 million in apprenticeship and skills training funds that we could work together to deliver better. We've worked very hard to influence the federal government by providing results of our training programs and showing them where they work. I think by working together in this country we'll have a stronger Canada and a stronger workforce and greater hope and opportunity for not only our young people but people who come to this country from other countries and call Canada home.

Congratulations to my colleague.

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I rise in support of the resolution of my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River. The issue that I really want to address is the integration of foreign trade professionals. This is something that is of particular interest to me because I have a very large number of immigrants in my riding, particularly Russian immigrants, who have had wonderful training at the highest level and find that not only are they not utilized, they're either unemployed or underutilized.

For individuals to be fully integrated and to become contributing members of Canadian society they need to find employment that utilizes their skills and training. I've heard of the problems individuals face in working in particular professions and in having their credentials recognized. These systemic barriers, and I'm really going to elaborate on that in a minute, transform what should be a transitional underemployment to chronic underemployment. This wasted potential results in a personal loss to the individual and to the province as a whole. The province at some stage in its history created bodies that were empowered to regulate access to trades and professions in the province through licensing and registration requirements. These associations have operated in an extremely independent manner, often free of political scrutiny and accountability.

Many have used their role as protectors of the health and safety of consumers as a guise to protect the interests of their members through exclusionary entrance requirements. This has created even greater barriers for immigrants, who are viewed as a threat to the earning power of the members of some professional associations and as an unknown quantity with unknown qualifications by other bodies. For example, in Ontario there are at least 43 regulatory and professional bodies that regulate access to professions. In addition, more than 70 trades are regulated by the Ministry of Education. But there is no complete list of every regulatory and professional body in each province, nor of the provincial departments that are supposed to be responsible. There is also no single body in Canada that assesses educational equivalency.

I want to talk about the profession of veterinary medicine—this will be very interesting to Dr Galt—to tell you about the systemic barriers. For example, for a foreign-trained professional veterinarian to get the ability

to practise in Ontario, they've got to pass three exams—the A, B and C levels. At the C level, which is the practical examination, it now costs \$6,000 for a foreign-trained veterinarian to take that test; that compares to \$666 for a Canadian-trained applicant. So it's 10 times as much for a foreign-trained applicant to try the exam as it is for a Canadian-trained applicant. For a recent immigrant who comes to this country, usually with limited resources, that is a systemic barrier. It just makes it virtually impossible for them to do that.

The other thing I want to talk about, and this comes directly from the department of veterinary medicine at Guelph, is some responses to questions asked by foreign-trained veterinarians.

It says, "If I am a foreign-trained veterinarian, can I enter the" department of veterinary medicine "program at the Ontario Veterinary College with advanced standing? They've already got a degree in their home country, so they want to know if they can get advanced standing. The answer is, "Due to the large number of regular applicants we have every year for the 100 spaces in each entering class, and the unlikelihood of spaces opening up in class, we are unable to accept these requests...." So they've said, "If you want to get in, apply like everybody else." We all know that it's very difficult to get in in the first place. All they're asking for is some recognition of their particular training.

Another thing: "Can I do this on an occasional or part-time basis?" The answer is, "The veterinary courses are only available to people who are registered in the department of veterinary medicine."

Another question: "Can I gain experience by working or volunteering in the OVC veterinary teaching hospital?" "Due to the large number of requests and the limited resources available, we regret that we are unable to permit volunteers in the hospital in order to gain veterinary experience." It's like the old adage, "I'm to light for heavy work and too heavy for light work. They're caught in a Catch-22."

There are many other areas where these systemic barriers are preventing us from achieving what my colleague has already stated: a brain gain instead of a brain drain.

I encourage all members of this Legislature to not only support but to enact legislation that will allow this problem to be addressed.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to say right off the bat this morning that this caucus will certainly be supporting the resolution before us today. We feel very strongly, as does the member bringing this forward, that one of the most important investments a government makes is in its people. Certainly where training is concerned, if we have any hope of competing in a economy that is becoming more and more global and moving more quickly as time goes by, we need to be reassessing our priorities and looking at where we're placing our emphasis, where establishing the fundamental framework upon which our economy, industry and work in support of communities is concerned.

The government will say, as they have this morning, that they are going to put more money into apprenticeship and training and the development of that kind of capacity in the system. But if their track record to date is any indication, we'll be waiting a long time. I would suggest to people that they not hold their breath. For example, in the budget that was just delivered here on Monday this week, people who are close to our colleges and universities will understand that, yes, there was a little bit of money put in to recognize the fact that we have a major challenge coming at us next year under the aegis of the double cohort. But there really isn't anything in the budget to recognize the need for us to invest heavily in the development of our skills and apprenticeship programs where our public sector training institutions are concerned.

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We have colleges and universities out there already starving, having been cut back significantly over the last six or seven years, both in capital and operating, now desperately trying to find the money they will require to deal with the overwhelming number of students who will come at them next year, never mind the challenge that's here, given to them by those who work in the industrial sector of our communities and with the economy, to shift gears from time to time, to be flexible as the minister has suggested, to make sure we are putting in place the programs, training and supports, that we have the instructors and facilities to actually provide the kind of training the member from Scarborough-Rouge River brought before us this morning. I want to make a couple of points with respect to that, besides what I've already said.

One is that if we don't invest in our colleges and universities and provide for the training and apprenticeship of some of the skills we need, we will be further behind as far as competing in the global economy is concerned. The other thing—and later on I'll expand on it a little further—is this issue of foreign-trained professionals in our communities. I don't think one has to look much further than the area of trying to find doctors for, it seems, all communities in our province while at the same time we have literally hundreds, maybe thousands, of already trained foreign doctors across the province driving taxis and working in professions that aren't in keeping with the investment they have made in their own education and training, and the desire they have to participate as professionals—doctors in our communities.

I only have to look at my own situation in Sault Ste Marie, where we're into more than a crisis—we're beyond a crisis. We have some very difficult realities confronting us in my community in the not-too-distant future that could be responded to in some very serious way if the government would only live up to its rhetoric in terms of actually doing something to provide foreign-trained doctors with the opportunity to practise in our communities.

If the government's initiative, commitment and resolve to move aggressively and constructively on the front of foreign-trained doctors is any indication of what

they're going to do where so many other skills and professions are concerned, I'm afraid we're going to be disappointed. Communities are going to be disappointed, and individuals looking for the kind of support these foreign-trained professionals can provide will be very disappointed as well.

Having travelled and spent some time in Europe over the last couple of years looking at how they develop their economy and what has given countries like Ireland and Finland a step up—and as a matter of fact taken countries that were lagging behind the European economy in many serious and significant ways for a number of years to the very front of the pack—I have to say that overwhelmingly most obvious is their understanding of the need to invest heavily in the buildup of intellectual capacity, invest heavily in their colleges and universities, so that technological innovation is out there on the cutting edge and in the forefront and money is being put into those institutions for research and development, which of course suggests that money needs to be put in as well, and they are doing it to make sure there are students attending so they can participate and drive in many significant ways that very important research and development capacity and component.

When you look at what we're doing here in Ontario, it's almost the exact opposite. We're not looking at investing in public institutions that will give us that edge in those areas in the global economy. We're thinking that the best way we can compete is to reduce standards, to reduce taxes, to provide less protection for our environment, for example, and also to reduce the role of government where giving leadership is concerned and in investment in those public institutions that we know are necessary and required if we're going to be able to compete.

For example, in Europe, starting back in the 1970s, the European Union, in partnership with member countries that were lagging behind somewhat or didn't have the resources, there was a tremendous focus on making sure the educational system was shored up, strengthened and invested in, such that in the early 1970s, major capital investments were made in educational institutions, colleges and universities. Not only that, but in the last 10 or 15 years, recognizing the need to make sure that all of their people have opportunity and are educated and that money doesn't get in the way of them considering going to college or university, they've wiped tuition fees out altogether.

The member from Scarborough-Rouge River, who's bringing the resolution forward this morning, mentions that we need to look at the question of fees and tuition where training and skills development are concerned. In Ireland and Finland, for example, there are no tuition fees for post-secondary education. They recognize that entrance into any profession any more, at a minimum, is a post-secondary education of some sort in those particular areas. So they've made it as easy as possible, if students qualify, to get into those programs and take advantage of them, because they know that will contribute to the

overall furthering of their economy and the well-being and social security of their particular jurisdictions.

That's all I have to put on the record on that this morning. I think it's a very important subject. It's something this government needs to turn their minds to immediately—if it's not too late already—in terms of our ability to compete out there and to provide the skills necessary to our people and to include our people in that very important exercise of doing business with the rest of the world.

1040

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton): I'm pleased to join in the debate this morning with respect to the member from Scarborough-Rouge River's resolution on training. I want to thank the member for bringing this forth. We're already doing a lot of what he's saying here, so I think it's appropriate to recognize that.

I'd like to say that in terms of apprenticeship training and dealing with providing the resources and training of our young people and people who want to upgrade their skills, I'm proud of the record of Georgian College in my riding. They've done a tremendous job, through the support of Minister Cunningham, in terms of these initiatives that the member opposite is seeking.

Certainly the automotive institute at Georgian College is one of a kind in the country. For many years it's been training young people with respect to the skills necessary to get into the automotive sector, be it marketing, production or sales. Also, the new program with respect to women in skilled trades and technological training has been a tremendous success at the college and is providing much-needed skilled trades personnel in tool and die and related to the automotive sector. We're very proud, in Simcoe county, of having Honda and a number of automotive companies that relate and provide parts to the automotive sector.

The college has a very proud record. I think their placement rate is about 93% to 95%, and it's geared toward vocational training and focused on the trades. They have other programs in terms of tourism and aviation. I think the ministry has given them great support to provide those programs and bring forth what's needed.

Certainly there's more that can be done, and we'd like to see the federal government play a much more active role than they have. In terms of the budget, I would quote Minister Ecker: "The government has modernized our apprenticeship system and increased funding by nearly 50%.

"In 1996, the federal government agreed to devolve primary responsibility for training to the provinces, along with nearly \$2 billion from employment insurance funds to pay for employment programs. Six years later, Ontario is the only province where the federal government has refused to sign an agreement. We continue to urge them to sign the labour market development agreement to allow Ontarians to access almost \$600 million in apprenticeship and skills training funds."

That is something that's part of this resolution in terms of working together with the federal government. I call on the member from Scarborough-Rouge River to use his influence with respect to the federal government to try to get them to co-operate with this province in terms of providing the funds that are necessary for skilled trades training. If not a major disappointment, it is discouraging to have a federal government that doesn't recognize the needs of the largest province in this country with respect to population and in terms of employment.

I want to commend the minister for the hard work that she's done in terms of this area. I believe we're moving in the right direction. I also want to commend the member from Scarborough-Rouge River for bringing attention to this and I think it supports the work we're doing.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I hope that all members might join with me in welcoming this great school group from Our Lady of Lourdes school in the great riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. As you would know, that is not a point of order. We welcome you.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'm very pleased to speak to my colleague's motion today. This is a very, very important issue. We're going to have a crisis on our hands in a few years if we don't deal with the skills shortages. I'm very proud to work with the member in giving the government ideas to address this challenge.

I want to talk a little bit, because my critic's role is colleges and universities, about the colleges and how they address skills development. They provide access to qualified students. They address skills shortages and respond quickly to industry requirements. They assist the market in maintaining global competitiveness. They provide programs that support the knowledge economy through curriculum development and renewal. They have laboratories and state-of-the-art equipment to provide our graduates with the needed skills.

Unfortunately, there's been a 40% decrease in funding in the last decade but a 35% increase in enrolment. When you take into consideration that 40% of post-secondary students in this province are college students, that's a significant gap.

We did acknowledge the government funding of the northern colleges in the budget this week. It was something we had talked to the government about, and we're really happy that they acknowledged the need up there and did fund the northern colleges. We thank the minister for that. But the rest of the colleges in the province go less than 7% of the money allocated for the double cohort. That won't be enough to address the challenge in 2003-04. It's in this area that the colleges have come out this week and said, "What do you expect us to do? We have thousands of extra students coming, we have a skills shortages crisis looming and yet you give us less than 7% of what you gave the universities and the colleges for the double cohort."

I only have a couple of minutes, but I want to talk little bit about the challenge of my city and my colleagu-

Dominic Agostino's city of Hamilton. Our population is growing rapidly and is becoming much older. This is true for a lot of the province, but Hamilton is one at the top with this challenge. Immigration now accounts for approximately 85% of Hamilton's total population growth, and that percentage could rise to 100% over the next couple of decades. However, by 2013 the number of adults in the labour force pre-retirement age group will exceed the number of youths in the labour force pre-entry group. In other words, the 55- to 64-year-olds will exceed the 15- to 24-year-olds. This gap of course widens mathematically in the future years. Therefore, Hamilton's labour force growth will cease altogether shortly after 2016 and the absolute size of the workforce will actually begin declining. This is a very significant challenge for Hamilton, as it is for the rest of the province.

Mohawk College is a very important partner in addressing these challenges, and this week Mohawk College did not get the funding they needed in order to graduate students and give apprenticeships to address this huge challenge.

The other point I want to make is that we are the only province in the country that has not signed a skilled trades agreement with the government.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: We actually signed it. They haven't signed it.

Mrs Bountrogianni: OK. The minister says, "We actually signed it. They haven't signed it." I have had conversations with both sides and I understand the differences. However, I think in this case, the point that Ontario is the only province where an agreement has not been reached says something. I'll stop there on that issue. I do hope that we sign that agreement.

Educational institutions will inherit massive staffing obligations over the next decade. We need to hire professors for community colleges. The amount of money that was given this week in the budget will not allow that to happen. I make a plea to the government to address the colleges' budget shortfall so we can address the skills shortages.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Good day—I thought I was answering the phone. I was doing two things at the same time. As you know, we're all busy in this assembly and sometimes trying to get straight what we're doing is quite interesting.

First of all, I want to rise in support of my good friend Mr Curling, who brings this resolution forward in order to deal with what I believe is a very serious issue in this province, the whole issue of training. You know, for example, that one of the unfortunate things the government has done over the last six or seven years was to really gut the apprenticeship training system in the province.

Before coming to the assembly, I was one who benefited from the apprenticeship training system in this province. I'm a journeyman electrician by trade and earned my trade by working in the mines in the Timmins area and going off to trade school in Ottawa and Toronto to learn the technical part of the trade to be able to write my licence.

I've got to say to the government, you just don't get it. What happens is that for years we've had an apprenticeship training system that was there to train people to work in the skilled trades in the plants and mines and various places across the province. It was a system, by and large, that worked fairly well. Ontario, compared to other jurisdictions, qualified some of the best tradespeople in the world.

Now we've gone to a system where there is no longer any incentive for employers to hire apprentices. There used to be a time, for example, when I went in when the employer was given a tax cut by way of a percentage of the wages they had to pay me in order to be able to train as an apprentice. So, for example, the first year of my apprenticeship the employer got a tax credit to offset the wages they paid me as a newly hired apprentice-trainee in the electrical field, and in the second and third years, progressively the tax reduction became less and less. As a result, the employer had an incentive to hire me.

The second thing the program did was that it allowed me to go off to trade school a number of times, and trade school was paid for by the province of Ontario. You went to a college of your choice, one of our community colleges. I chose both George Brown and Algonquin College to do my training and, when I went there, I didn't have to pay any tuition to get in the door. That was paid by the province. Unfortunately, this government now views apprenticeship training as any college program, and apprentices who are going off to get trained are now having to pay tuition to get in the door. That means, quite frankly, that most apprentices—obviously they're younger—don't have the money, in most cases, are married and have obligations at home. I know, from the very few apprentices who are being trained in the province and talking to some of the people in the trade schools, they're finding it very difficult to go off to trade school because there really is no incentive there.

For that reason, the NDP caucus has been working on a package to revamp the entire apprenticeship training system. We believe, as my good friend Tony Martin talked about earlier, that training, education, is a key component to the development of a strong economy. One of the things we believe as New Democrats is that we need to have not only community colleges to train people coming out of high school or deciding to go back to college or university, but we have to have a good apprenticeship training system. We're working on a program now that would see, if we were elected as the government, a newly devised apprenticeship training program that goes beyond the skilled trades as we understand them. So if an employer out there is working in manufacturing or production-type work, they would be able to say, "There are some skilled jobs that we have within our employ that don't fall under the old category of skilled trades, but we think there needs to be some skills training for those people to do that."

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So in co-operation with our community college system or our universities, we would be able to develop the

proper training programs to make sure there's accredited training and at the same time have a type of tax credit for the employer to be able to offset the costs of training those employees while they're in the apprenticeship training system. We would also reverse what the government has done by way of putting tuition fees in place for apprentices across this province.

The reason we believe that, as my good friend Mr Martin from Sault Ste Marie has raised, is that if you look at the successful economies of Europe, one of the key components of those economies working has been training. They call Ireland the Celtic Tiger. Mr Martin's done a lot of work on this, working between Sault Ste Marie and Ireland to develop trade opportunities between his city and region and Ireland.

The story of Ireland's success is that one of the first things they did—if you remember, way back when, Ireland had an economy that was not doing as well as it is now. Quite frankly, it was one of the worst economies in Europe. Then the government there decided to focus in on what the best opportunities were. They decided it was on the tech side, and they provided free college or university education to anybody who had the marks and who wanted to go. As a result, they've built a skills base within the economy, so when employers and future investors are looking to invest in Ireland, they've got the people to draw into those employers to do the jobs that have to be done. As a result, the Irish economy has moved in leaps and bounds and is one of the leading economies in Europe today.

So I say your old ideological ideas of the right don't work. What you need to do is to take a look at what's happening in Europe under some progressive governments. Look at training from the perspective of an investment in our future, not only of our people but also in our overall economy as an economic activity.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My compliments to the member from Scarborough-Rouge River for bringing forward this resolution. It is certainly one that I can enthusiastically support, particularly from being out in rural and small-town Ontario on the task force that the Premier set up a few years ago on rural economic renewal. Skills training was one of the top three issues they kept bringing forward.

I well remember doing some follow-ups last June, just a year ago now, being in Seaford when a very significant industry in that community made the statement that if they were to close in that small town, they would never build again in small-town Ontario because of the difficulty of getting skilled workers into that community. I thought that was most unfortunate. It wasn't line workers; it was the skilled mechanics and the skilled electricians.

Lack of skilled workers is more of a problem in small-town Ontario than in the big cities. A large part of it has to do with a cultural issue. Parents want their kids to go to university. There's something wrong with going to colleges. A typical conversation with a guidance teacher is, "Oh, you wouldn't want to go to college or become a

skilled worker. You'd want to go to university. I went to such and such university. It's a great university. Wouldn't you like to go there?" I think it's unfortunate that that happens.

Have a look at some of the skilled workers at GM. A little overtime and they're over \$100,000 a year. That's what skilled workers can accomplish.

I wanted to make reference to the comments from the member for Sault Ste Marie, talking about lack of R&D. Have a look at the challenge fund. I was recently at the bioconference. Ontario is the best place to do R&D, for any company. That's why we have so many pharmaceutical companies here. The Japanese delegation recognized that. Individuals at the bioconference walked up to me and told me that: there is no place like Ontario to do R&D.

He was also talking about nothing for the north. I don't think he looked at the budget. There is \$100 million for northern and rural colleges and \$6 million for northern and rural universities. I think he should have a look.

The member for Timmins-James Bay talked about the apprenticeship program being gutted. Yes, \$100 million was gutted from the apprenticeship program by the federal government. Let's look at who is doing the gutting. No wonder they have a surplus, with what they've cut from health care, down to 14 cents on the dollar, and cutting \$100 million out of apprenticeship programs for our students who want to get some skills training. That's where the problem is.

I also appreciated the comment from the member for York Centre and some of the systemic barriers that are out there. I was unaware of that differentiation that he brought forward. But that's not the only place. We also have barriers for our physicians and many of our other professions.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It is my pleasure to briefly join this debate. The member for Scarborough-Rouge River is trying to elevate the discussion in this House, but it does not come without a price. It is about this House recognizing that we have an obligation.

The world has changed mighty in the last 10 and 15 years and we have fallen behind other jurisdictions. What the member for Scarborough-Rouge River is trying to tell us is, let's get back to first principles here. Let's see if we can, in a non-partisan way in private members' hour, subscribe to the idea that every member of our community and our society who lives in Ontario should be able to reach their potential. They should be able to reach their potential for their own self-potential, but also, frankly, for the benefit of the rest of us.

We don't do well. We, in the Liberal portion of the House, see inimitably that what's advanced in the last number of years as our rights doesn't mean anything if they can't be exercised by a broad sweep of society. Sadly, that can't be said to be true about Ontario today.

For example, I point to the area of high schools where we have general and utter confusion when it comes to workplace curriculum. In grades 9 and 10 for example,

we have nothing there for kids who might find themselves on a track to colleges and universities. There is confusion again at the college level where right now, if you call up colleges, they will tell you different things about how they will interpret the new curriculum. Does that matter in the soup of things? It does, because the principle here is that we would allow that to happen, that we would allow what's happening, which is kids to dead-end in our high schools right now.

Last year 55% of kids in grade 9 failed the applied math test. Now we may think, "Tough on those kids," but do you know what that means? We have a car crash that's going to reverberate because kids won't qualify for many of the courses that would get them into apprenticeships that would maximize their skills and training along the way.

It's the business of this House that this not happen. Instead, right now we have something that we have to untangle: we have what we call curriculum casualties. If we had subscribed to the principles that were put forward by the member for Scarborough-Rouge River, we wouldn't have let that happen. We would have a higher regard for the fact that the old-fashioned race is, "How many people can we get out of high schools and into colleges and universities? Let's not worry about the rest." Well, the rest is 45% or 50% of the kids. In 1950 that didn't matter. In 1960, 1970 and 1980 it didn't matter as much. But it matters today and we do not have a plan here. We have an itsy-bitsy, tiny program to try and address the needs of the rest of the youth of this province.

We have something that, on all sides of this House, we have to say has been inadequately addressed in terms of our sincerity in welcoming people from other provinces, and it is disheartening to see other fingers being pointed. We can't get a training program going and we can't get foreign-trained professionals to work to their ability. That's a failure on all our parts. I want to thank the member for Scarborough-Rouge River for putting us in a position to address that and to take the first step, which is recognition of the basic principles to actually address that situation.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I appreciate having time, even if it's just a few minutes, to support my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River on his very foresighted resolution today to really try to transform Ontario into a skills-culture society. That is something we really have to do to make sure that, in a world that's being driven by knowledge-based industry, we keep our competitive edge in Ontario, and that all our working men and women in this province are competitive and can be world leaders in all the various skill sets.

I'd like to compliment the member for Northumberland and on his observation that part of our culture really has to change, that we, as parents, would say we want our children to go to university and many of us will dismiss the tremendous skills and jobs that are out there. Whether we're guidance counsellors or parents, we need to make sure our young people are exposed to all the possibilities to earn a living. Gyproc installers in Toronto make up to

\$100,000 a year. It is tremendous what our skills contribute and how you can make a very good living and raise a family with the many skill sets that are available in Ontario.

Germany is an example that for 150 years has had a skills and apprenticeship culture. Part of their success, I believe, is that they start that at so young an age. I think we've allowed our apprenticeship programs to develop much later in life. We need to be identifying those opportunities in high school and start to co-share with work a little more in apprenticeship programs and the academic work we do in high school.

I would say to the minister, who is here and I'm glad she is here, that we should not be putting barriers to apprenticeship programs. I consider the new classroom fee the minister introduced as a barrier to apprenticeships. It's \$400, and a lot of people might say, "What's \$400?" But if you take an electrician, for example, basic in-classroom training is \$400. Then it's another \$400 for your intermediate training. If you go into advanced training, which an electrician is going to require to get her ticket, it's another \$400. Then you work for a year, and if you go into optional industrial electronics training, that's another \$400. So a \$1,600 penalty on trying to be an electrician in this province has been imposed by the minister and the Ernie Eves government.

We're trying to make sure we transform ourselves into a learning culture, and yet we put penalties in the way of people. That's not a very good signal we're sending our young people. We want to encourage them to get training and take away those barriers. Let's get Ontario trained and competitive.

1100

The Acting Speaker: The member for Scarborough-Rouge River has two minutes.

Mr Curling: Let me thank my colleagues for supporting this resolution. I'm sure it's on their minds, and basically what the resolution does is raise the awareness of it. I just want to make sure too that some of the things that may slip away from us, like the fact I raised that about 44% of our people being functionally illiterate or illiterate—it's difficult to train any nation if they have that sort of inability.

The anecdote goes, and we hear very much, that we have so many doctors and engineers driving taxis. It seems to me that that's why they are such bad drivers. They should really be doctors and engineers. The fact is, if we could concentrate on putting people where they are better utilized, we wouldn't have that brain waste; we would have a brain gain in all this. So I would encourage the government to let them practise medicine and engineering.

At the end of the day, there's a need to leverage our diversity. The key to this is connecting people—talent, knowledge, education, experience and the economy—a new contract between Canadians who are foreign-trained professionals and the directorial bodies of their respective professions—which I call the gatekeepers—the government and the private sector. The new contract must be

bold and innovative, whereby a centralized solution is the desired objective. The new contract is the essence of a training culture. Therefore I ask for and appreciate very much my colleagues' support of it.

As a matter of fact, I'm very passionate about the fact that it brings dignity and self-worth to individuals and their families that a father or mother can stand up and say, "You should go to school and get an education," and the kid cannot turn back and say, "But what happened to you, Dad? You're an engineer and you're driving a taxi." I encourage us all to develop that training culture to bring dignity back to the family.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for debate on ballot item number 51. I will put the question at 12 o'clock noon.

AUDIT AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA VÉRIFICATION DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Mr Gerretsen moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to amend the Audit Act to insure greater accountability of hospitals, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations which receive grants or other transfer payments from the government or agencies of the Crown / Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la vérification des comptes publics afin d'assurer une responsabilité accrue de la part des hôpitaux, des universités et collèges, des municipalités et d'autres organisations qui reçoivent des subventions ou d'autres paiements de transfert du gouvernement ou d'organismes de la Couronne.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Kingston and the Islands has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I'm very pleased to speak on this bill today, because it's something I've always been extremely interested in, both at this level of government and at the local level.

As a matter of fact, back on December 20, 2000, I introduced a similar bill, Bill 180, which was not debated because the House prorogued. Immediately after the throne speech that was made in this House by the government in April 2001, I reintroduced the bill as Bill 5.

Let me say at the outset that this is not a new idea. Similar bills—maybe not exactly the same—have been introduced by other members in this House. Mr Maves from Niagara Falls introduced a similar bill back in 1996 that was approved by this House but unfortunately didn't go anywhere.

Let me also quickly say that this is not a new idea to this House in any way, shape or form. We go right back to 1989 when, under a Liberal government, the public accounts committee at that point in time urged a bill of a similar nature, and again back in 1993. As a matter of

fact, similar bills have been introduced and discussed by the public accounts committee over the last 13 years under all three different governments.

What is the purpose of the bill? The purpose of the bill is to give greater accountability about how the taxpayers' dollars are being spent—not to the government necessarily, but to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Some 60% of all the money the government spends goes to transfer agents or grant recipients. In effect, what this bill will do is give the auditor the right to follow the money, to see whether that money is actually being expended by the grant recipients for the purposes for which it was intended. It also gives him powers to inspect, and powers to examine under oath individuals who may be receiving these grants in one way or another. But it also puts an obligation on him to keep confidential the information he receives; it can only be used for the purposes as contained in the act. So any freedom-of-information issues are addressed in the act.

Why should the Provincial Auditor have these powers? Well, the Provincial Auditor is one of the five officers of this assembly who are responsible not to the government, not to the opposition, but to the 103 members who are elected to this Legislative Assembly. He would be responsible to the Legislative Assembly.

As I mentioned earlier, this goes right back to 1989, when the public accounts committee at that time passed a motion endorsing that the auditor would be given these kinds of powers. It's happened on three or four occasions since that time. Every time, what seems to happen is that the finance minister of the day—all well-meaning, well-intentioned individuals, regardless of political stripe—has said, "Yes, this is a good idea. We're studying it and we may actually do something about it."

This government actually went farther than that. In its throne speech of April 19, 2001, it made the statement that it would propose "amendments to the Audit Act that would empower the Provincial Auditor to ensure that institutions funded by Ontario taxpayers use that money prudently, effectively and as intended." Well, that has not happened as yet. I know the government members will very well say, "Well, it's going to happen." All I can say to that is that similar promises have been made over the last 13 years without effect. What I'm simply asking the members of this assembly to do is to pass this bill and send it off to committee. Let's see if we can collectively come up with a bill, perhaps with some amendments, that will make all the grant recipients, including government departments, in one way or another more accountable to the Legislative Assembly through the Provincial Auditor.

I know that from time to time all of us may disagree about certain government programs, as to whether money should or should not be spent, but that's not the issue here. Surely we all agree that whatever money is being expended under government programs should be expended wisely, in a cost-efficient and accountable fashion. That's what this is all about. That's what the work of the public accounts committee is all about. I would urge the members to see it that way.

As a result of the public accounts committee making a request to the Minister of Finance as to whether or not he would be introducing amendments to the Audit Act, as have been promised over the last 13 years by governments of all three political stripes in the House, he stated in a letter addressed to myself, as chairman of the public accounts committee, "I am pleased that the standing committee on public accounts supports the expansion of the Provincial Auditor's powers to permit full-scope value-for-money audits of grant recipient organizations." Those are the words of Mr Flaherty, who was then the finance minister. So I would simply ask, if we truly believe in the notion that whatever money is being expended publicly should be expended in a truly accountable fashion, that members of all sides support this bill.

1110

I know there may be a fear out there, particularly by some of the transfer agents—in hearings for health on this issue back in 1996—who are not all that much in favour of it. The hospitals, the universities, the colleges, the municipalities, have all said, "We really don't need this." Maybe they fear the fact that the Provincial Auditor will be, in effect, doing complete audits of them. The amendments specifically state that the Provincial Auditor will only have the ability to audit the books of those particular agencies, of the universities and the colleges and the hospitals and the municipalities and other grant recipients, to the extent of the grant or the money that is actually being transferred to them, for the sole purpose of ensuring that the money is being spent in the areas that the government has given the money for in the first place.

I know there may also be a fear—and I would just say to those organizations that accountability is what it's all about. This has nothing to do with the notion of academic freedom, as I've heard from some of the transfer agents, some of the universities and colleges. This has to do with making sure that the money that is collected from you and me as taxpayers is being spent properly, in truly authorized government programs that are out there from time to time.

There is also the fear that, will the Provincial Auditor, in effect, be auditing grant recipients that get a very minuscule amount of money from the government? I would surely hope that all of us in this House can agree that the Provincial Auditor, being held in as high esteem as he is, and his office are only going to audit those organizations that may be necessary from time to time. He's not going to make complete audits in situations where the transfers to particular grant recipients are of a very small and very minor nature. I think that kind of concern that's been out there can be alleviated.

One may very well ask why, traditionally, the finance ministries and the Ministers of Finance, of all three political stripes in the House, have been reluctant to endorse this. They've always said so, but they've never really done anything about it. It may have something to do with the fact that maybe there's a feeling that they may actually lose some power.

I think the fundamental difference in governments holding their transfer agents responsible to government is

that this is an accountability issue not of the transfer agent to the government but of the transfer agent to the Provincial Auditor, who, after all, is an independent officer of this assembly. That's where the fundamental difference lies between the amendments that I'm proposing and the Public Sector Accountability Act. There may very well be reason for there to be a Public Sector Accountability Act, whereby the government may want to hold the people that we give the money to accountable. But the kind of accountability that I'm talking about is through the Provincial Auditor, the independent agency that exists for this purpose.

I would hope that members of this House will not only endorse this concept, because surely to goodness we all want to make sure that money is being expended wisely and in an accountable fashion, but that they would also see this process through by referring it to a committee of this House and by adopting whatever comes out of that committee by way of amendments and otherwise.

I look forward to the ensuing debate and hope that all members of the House will accept this in the spirit that it's given, the notion that we all surely want to make sure that all government money is being spent in a wise and prudent fashion.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I'll be sharing my time with the member for Northumberland and the member for Durham.

It was interesting to listen to the member speak. I hope he didn't talk himself out of this bill.

Efficient, effective and accountable government is very important to the people of Ontario. Our government recognized this back in 1995 when the Common Sense Revolution, largely based on the principles of transparency and accountability, helped lead our party to a landslide victory. Taxpayers rewarded us for our commitment to an effective, efficient and accountable government by giving us a second consecutive majority win, in 1999. We were certain that this was something that taxpayers in Ontario have come to expect from their government.

Ontario taxpayers understand the value of each and every dollar and the importance of priority-setting and responsible spending. They relate to the old saying, "Every penny counts." So too does their government. Unlike the federal Liberals, where last year it was the human resources boondoggle and this year it's the questionable contracts to party-faithful friends, we take the word "accountability" very seriously. The Ontario government's definition of accountability is actually based on what the word is meant to mean. Accountability is a way in which organizations and their workers must answer to and take responsibility for their performance to those who pay for and use their services. Those people are the taxpayers of Ontario. Without accountability, faith and respect in all government, institutions would not exist.

This government, as we have said in the past, solidly believes that tax dollars belong to the hardworking people of Ontario, not to the government. Taxpayers, citizens

and users of government services expect, in fact demand, that the government deliver quality services in the most efficient manner possible. Over the past seven years, the government has improved and will continue to improve its own ability to deliver the most efficient and effective services possible to the people of Ontario.

This morning, Bill 5 will receive second reading. This is An Act to amend the Audit Act to insure greater accountability of hospitals, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations which receive grants or other transfer payments from the government or agencies of the Crown. It is a bill that further demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency to better serve Ontario taxpayers and ensure future prosperity for the people of this great province.

Mr Speaker, allow me to quote something from our leader, Premier Ernie Eves, who was the finance minister back in 1996: "The people of Ontario expect their government to live within its means ... we are finding savings in every area of government activity. The government is making the same difficult decisions and adjustments that we have all had to make at home and at work in our everyday lives." Today, the discipline that then Finance Minister Ernie Eves brought to the way government spends taxpayers' hard-earned dollars is continuing as he now leads us as Premier of Ontario.

This is why we continue to pursue a consistent course of tight fiscal discipline, balanced budgets and debt reduction in order to provide more resources to priority areas. As a result, excluding health care and education, real program spending per person is down by close to 30% since 1995-96.

This year's budget continued with our tradition of efficient, effective and accountable government. We are doing even more to ensure taxpayers receive the best value possible for their hard-earned dollars.

As I mentioned earlier, Bill 5 is An Act to amend the Audit Act. Currently, the Provincial Auditor can do inspection audits of grant-recipient organizations, which is a strict evaluation of accounting records only. Under a value-for-money mandate, the Provincial Auditor would be able to assess whether grant-recipient organizations are delivering services with due regard for economy and efficiency and how they measure the end report on their own effectiveness.

Over the past decade, the Provincial Auditor has lobbied for this extended mandate and has had the support of the public accounts committee, of which the member mentioned is Chair, I believe. Since 1990, the Provincial Auditor and the public accounts committee have been requesting significant changes to the Audit Act, including the right to broaden the scope of current strict evaluations of accounting records of grant-recipient organizations. To date, five of the other nine provinces in Canada have the legislative mandate to conduct full-scope audits on grant recipients. On April 19, 2001, the government announced in the speech from the throne its intention to allow the Provincial Auditor to conduct broader audits on publicly funded institutions.

Following the speech from the throne, a private member's bill had its first reading on April 23, 2001, as the member mentioned. Bill 5 is a reintroduction of MPP John Gerretsen's Bill 180 from the previous year. Under Bill 5, the auditor would be able to conduct full-scope value-for-money audits of grant-recipient organizations. This act will address this government's belief that the public has the right to know that their tax dollars are being spent efficiently and in their best interests.

Effective, efficient accountability is required not just of the government of Ontario but of all institutions funded by taxpayers. Bill 5 would ensure that other organizations, such as hospitals, universities and colleges, continuously strive to follow the best management practices. This government is determined to make this happen. We want to make these organizations more open and accountable to the public because taxpayers simply deserve to know how their money is being spent. No other jurisdiction in North America and no other government is so actively pursuing value for taxpayers' money.

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I said it before and I'll say it again: the government has been saying for years that tax dollars belong to the hard-working people of Ontario, not the government. That is why efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are so important to Ontario and its future prosperity.

I congratulate the member from Kingston. Perhaps he is like a phoenix rising from the ashes when he has been converted to the responsible, efficient and accountable use of taxpayers' dollars. I hope this is so, and I hope it is not a new head of the hydra that may be appearing for the first time.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the debate. Clearly the issue of understanding the province's finances and the public having a right to see them is of paramount importance.

To the previous speaker, I'd quote Mr Eves too. In 1995 he said, "We're going to get rid of two sets of books." Well, on Monday this week we found we still have two sets of books. The budget was tabled here on Monday and the estimates were tabled here on Monday, and in many ministries' spending there was a \$400-million or \$500-million difference. And it was Mr Eves who in 1995 promised we'd have the budget presented before the fiscal year started. So I think we have made very little progress in the last seven years in getting a clear picture for the people of Ontario of our finances. This year's budget said we'll finally do it next year, April 1, 2003.

I'm extremely supportive of measures that will add clarity to our finances. Right now, they're not. The auditor made the point about the two sets of books, telling the people of Ontario that there is confusion in the finances. He quoted a billion-dollar expenditure in health that in one set of books was recorded in one fiscal year and in the other set of books recorded in a different year—a billion-dollar swing.

In terms of the need to understand the finances of our partners, it's extremely important. The province has

taken about \$5 billion of debt that in the past would have been on the province's books and moved that debt off the province's books on to off-book debt financing. They moved it on to school boards. School boards now have about \$2 billion worth of new debt to fund new schools that used to be on the province's books and now has been put on the school boards' books. By the way, I would add that the school boards are paying at least a quarter of 1% higher interest to borrow that money. The taxpayers are essentially just wasting at least \$5 million a year in extra interest costs to have the school boards borrow that money rather than the province. Exactly the same thing is happening with our colleges and universities. They've got about a billion and a half dollars of new debt that previously would have been on the province's books and is now on their books. Of the increased grants for colleges and universities, \$100 million is going to go to pay the interest on that new debt. Exactly the same thing, I might add, has happened with nursing homes. There are 20,000 nursing home beds, long-term-care beds, being built. In the past the province used to help fund that. No more. The province has said, "You go out and borrow that money and we'll pay you \$10 a day per person. We'll pay essentially the principal and interest costs."

So I say to the people of Ontario, why is it important that we understand the finances of our transfer partners? It's because there is at least \$5 billion of new debt on their books that used to be on the province's books. Creative accounting, which frankly has got a lot of businesses in trouble, moved it off the province's books on to their books and it's costing \$12.5 million a year in extra interest costs.

So why is it important that we have a good look at and a good understanding of these books? It's because an awful lot of the finances are the responsibility of the provincial taxpayers, and in the interest of clarity—I'd say at least \$5 billion of new debt—we have to understand that.

So I appreciate the proposal by my colleague. I think it will add a note of transparency to the province's books at a very timely point.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I'm happy to speak to this resolution this morning and, right up front, to say that we certainly will support the effort of the member from Kingston. We think any move forward to improve accountability, to let the people of Ontario and ourselves know how money is being spent, where it's being spent, whether there is value for investment and then by that to give us some indication of perhaps where money might be more appropriately spent is always very helpful.

I guess it surprises me that there aren't in place some vehicles that would allow for the auditing of the MUSH sector financial statements, financial carryings-on, by the Provincial Auditor, though I say that recognizing that in most instances the MUSH sector, those municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals and other groups funded by the provincial government, do act very responsibly, do take their responsibility very seriously. I think that if you

were to take a look at any of their financial transactions at any given time you'd find that they're operating above-board and honourably and trying to do the best they can with the money they have. However, that's not what I wanted to focus on in my comments this morning with regard to this issue.

I'd like to first of all say that I hope—and knowing the member from Kingston, I'm sure I'm correct here—that this isn't an attack on the MUSH sector, on municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals etc. It's rather a challenge to this government to be more responsible, be more accountable, to work more co-operatively with their partners in the delivery of public services in this province, particularly when you consider the major shift that has happened over the last six or seven years in terms of who delivers what any more in Ontario. It's hard to figure out from one week to the next who's responsible for what and who, at the end of the day, will be held to account for what. Just from that perspective, if this isn't, hopefully, somehow a criticism or an attack on these sectors, then I think it would prove to be a valuable exercise.

I'm sure if you talk to any of the people particularly in municipalities these days, you'd find that they would appreciate anybody paying attention to the concerns they're raising about the fact that they're being asked more and more to deliver services they were never expected, when they got into the business of municipal government, to have to deliver, and alas, to their chagrin—and we've made this point many, many times over the last six or seven years—there isn't the money. There is the responsibility shifted down, there is the download of the requirement to deliver all kinds of services, from health services to housing to ambulance to all kinds of other things that traditionally have either been delivered directly and solely by the province or in partnership with the province that municipalities are now being asked to deal with, and they're simply not being given the resources and the wherewithal to live up to that very onerous and serious responsibility. So I'm sure that these organizations, these agencies, these vehicles of government would welcome the auditor coming into their jurisdiction and looking at their books and then working with them to send a message to the general public out there, and then through them, in particular to the government to say, "It's not a question of irresponsibility. It's not a question of somebody doing something untoward or illegal here. It's a question of governments, colleges, universities, hospitals trying desperately to find ways to be creative, to stretch that dollar that they are now getting to cover those areas that they are being asked to cover, and they know they don't have the resources to do it." So I'm sure they'd welcome in the bat of an eye anybody coming in to talk to them about that particular issue.

1130

For example, the colleges and universities sector: if you look at the budget that was delivered on Monday, yes, there's some increase in that budget to universities and colleges, but that increase is targeted almost solely

and completely to the very real challenge that colleges and universities are going to meet next year. There has been absolutely nothing up to now to colleges and universities to deal with the reality of the double cohort, the doubling of their enrolment in first year that will happen next year and that will require them to provide classroom space, to provide dormitories for students, to provide teachers, to provide the supports in terms of libraries, and the list goes on and on. There has been absolutely no indication that this government up to now understood the very heavy financial burden that will place on colleges and universities.

This year we have in the budget, yes, a commitment to giving those institutions some relief where that is concerned, but no recognition whatsoever of the fact that their budgets have been reduced so significantly over the last six or seven years that most of that money will probably be taken up with simply shoring up what they already have. So to suggest for a second, as some members here have even as early as this morning, that somehow colleges and universities are getting some kind of a windfall here because of this budget, particularly northern colleges and universities that have had their budgets struck so viciously that they're now starving to death, some of them barely standing any more, talking about all kinds of things that we wouldn't even have considered 10 or 15 years ago in terms of things they might have to or want to or need to do to keep themselves afloat—yes, I think they would probably welcome with open arms anybody who would be willing to come in and sit down with them and look at their books, look at the challenge they're facing and provide them with some suggestion as to things they might do to be more creative, to perhaps raise more money, and to send a message particularly to the two senior levels of government, each of them declaring over the last five or six years ever-increasing surpluses in revenues coming into their coffers, to talk to them about maybe spending some of that money in the MUSH sector and particularly, as I've said, in the colleges and universities sector.

If you look around the world today in some of those jurisdictions that are head and shoulders above everybody else where being competitive in the economy is concerned, these jurisdictions, in partnership with their umbrella organizations—for example, the European Union and countries like Ireland and Finland—are investing heavily in the buildup of infrastructure in municipalities to support the kind of economic activity that's now beginning to happen. There's investment of a significant nature in colleges and universities because they know that it makes more sense to invest in the buildup of intellectual capacity. It makes more sense to invest in vehicles that will give you the cutting edge in technological change, give you the capacity to do research and development and to have students involved in that.

In Ontario, and this is where our MUSH sector becomes rather agitated and anxious and fearful, the only strategy, it seems, to make us competitive or to keep us in the mix somewhat or somehow where the North Ameri-

can or global economy is concerned is this issue of tax breaks, that if you give ever more and increasing tax breaks, somehow we're going to be more competitive.

I think we've seen, as indicated by what was in Monday's budget, that that approach just doesn't work. It's not being done in other jurisdictions. Although in some ways it's a little late in the game—but better late than never—why wouldn't we, at this time at least, as well as calling for more facility for the Provincial Auditor to move in and audit some of these struggling organizations, also sit down with them and promise that once we do the audit, we will do whatever it takes to give them the capacity they need to live up to the potential we all know they have to deliver first-class programs?

We know, and my caucus in particular knows, that if you're going to have a progressive, civil, energetic, positive and constructive jurisdiction in the world we're moving into today, we have to have at all levels, whether it be federal, provincial or municipal, government vehicles, and that speaks to what we refer to as the MUSH sector—universities, schools, hospitals and other agencies out there—that are well funded, not worrying about their very existence but encouraged by way of the support and resources they get to be all they can be if we're going to stay on the cutting edge and compete and provide the people who call Ontario home with the opportunities we know a jurisdiction as rich as Ontario should have for everybody concerned.

Give municipalities, universities, colleges, hospitals that need to provide health care, and those other vehicles out there, the capacity they need to make sure everybody who calls Ontario home is included in the ongoing, day-to-day life of those communities, so that they can prosper and be as viable and vital as they have in fact been in the past, but have in the last six to seven years lost some of their vitality because we're not doing that investing.

Yes, we're shifting the responsibility and the requirement of a government from the provincial to the municipal, to hospitals, to universities, to schools, to other government agencies out there in communities, to do ever more and more, and at the same time we're not providing them with the resources. We're not providing them with the resources, not because we don't have the money but because the government—I don't include myself in that because it wouldn't have been the choice I would have made—has made the choice to provide tax breaks to corporations and individuals within Ontario who, in some instances—not all—really don't need further tax breaks at the expense of these very valuable services that would in many significant, serious and important ways provide service to more and more people, given that capacity.

In supporting the member for Kingston's very thoughtful and well-reasoned bill this morning to provide the Provincial Auditor with the ability to go in and audit those municipal, university, school and health care sectors and other government agencies, I also stand here and encourage the government, once the auditor has done his work, has reported back and pointed to shortcomings

and difficulties in those sectors, to actually take their responsibility seriously and give the leadership I think everybody expected they would give when they were elected back in 1995 and again in 1999, to work with communities and people struggling in universities and colleges to keep up with the ever-increasing speed of technological change and the need to increase intellectual capacity in our communities, and to provide the resources and leadership to work in partnership, similar to a lot of the activity that we were participating in when we were government from 1990 to 1995, in some very difficult economic times, so that communities such as Sault Ste Marie, Kapuskasing, Thunder Bay and Atikokan—and the list goes on and on—might feel somebody understands their challenges.

I will be supporting this this morning. Our caucus will be supporting it. I will be encouraging the government not only to support it but to provide the resources necessary to back up what they find.

1140

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I appreciate the opportunity to be able to say a few words on Bill 5, which the member for Kingston and the Islands is bringing forward. It's An Act to amend the Audit Act to insure greater accountability of hospitals, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations etc.

I wonder why he left out school boards when naming the others, because a significant number of dollars flow from the province to school boards. I certainly agree with the intent of this bill, but I'm left wondering why school boards were left out of this particular ballot item.

I really support the value-for-money audits. When you look at the MUSH sector—and basically that's what's being referred to here, the MUSH sector plus other organizations. Look at what happens with some of these monopolies. There's no question that school boards are monopolies, that hospitals are monopolies and so on. Look at some of the salaries that end up getting set.

I know we're not transferring money to Hydro One and to the old Ontario Hydro. Nevertheless, it's an example of a monopoly that went awry. I'm told by some of the people in my riding that they're spelling "one" in Hydro One wrong, that it should have been Hydro Won, and indeed it did appear that way, particularly with some of the salaries that came to our attention most recently.

But I also look at some of the salaries flowing in for the CEOs of hospitals. Talk about a value-for-money audit here. It's a step more than just mismanaging the money. I think we have to look more closely at that when we have CEOs approaching a half-million dollars and then they're crying poor. They don't have to look after the medical side. They look after the plant and the running of the building. I really fail to understand why on earth they should be making that kind of money.

I enthusiastically welcome the idea of the value-for-money audit. I think way too many dollars are not being used effectively and efficiently, the hard-earned money of the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. Go out and to any poll of the people here in the province of Ontario

and they'll tell you that they believe there's a lot of money being wasted within our health system. I tend to agree with them. It's awfully easy to just go out and ask for more and more funding. And this may be true in some of the other monopolies that we end up supporting.

We have indeed a very serious responsibility to our taxpayers, I think all the way through to things like our Trillium investments, which are doing a lot of good, especially in small-town Ontario. But I don't want to see that ever evolve into the HRDC fiasco of a few years ago, which the Liberal government handled so poorly going into it and then which Jane Stewart also handled extremely poorly once they were into that mess.

This kind of thing being brought forward by the member from Kingston and the Islands I certainly support. I liked the comment made by the member from Halton about the public's right to know. That's absolutely right.

I draw a comparison between the federal government and what's happening with the provincial. There, people like the auditors and the Integrity Commissioner report to the Prime Minister, not to Parliament. That's not so here. Those people in those kinds of positions report to the Legislature. It gives them a lot more freedom and less risk to their job, of course.

I just want to wind up by commenting on what the member for Sault Ste Marie said, that we should do as the auditor suggests. I would suggest to him that he have a look at the response of this government to what the auditor suggests. We follow it very closely and take it very seriously. I would suggest to him that he look back at what the NDP did when the auditor came in with reports and how they followed up.

I'll leave the rest of my time for my good friend the hard-working member from the great riding of Durham. Thanks very much for the opportunity to speak, and I enthusiastically support Bill 5.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I'm pleased to stand this morning in support of my colleague from Kingston and the Islands and his Bill 5. As a matter of fact, I have in the members' gallery some folks from the Essex County Association for Community Living: Marilyn Briggs, Cory Muise, Tim Wilson, Lee Holling and Nancy Wallace-Gero, who also support this bill, I am sure.

Seriously, though, I do want to say that this bill comes before private members' public business as just good sense. Some 75% of the money our provincial government spends is not under the review of the Provincial Auditor. I think most people would be surprised to know that upwards of \$50 billion of a \$65-billion or \$67-billion budget doesn't come under the review of the Provincial Auditor. I'm certainly a strong supporter of public accountability, and I think this is another step we can take, in that it will provide accountability. It will provide for the Legislature, for that matter, to have a report brought to it that gets into the area of the bulk of provincial spending.

Those agencies, boards and commissions that are being brought under this bill—which, by the way, include school boards—shouldn't be concerned about a

visit from the Provincial Auditor. I spent 22 years of my business life as the financial officer of a company that was audited every year, and I welcomed the audit. It's an opportunity to prove how well your organization runs. And if there are areas that need to be brought up to snuff, they should welcome that advice as well.

In the nine years I've been here, I think finance ministers have supported this kind of legislation. I'm frankly not sure why it hasn't been brought forward in the past. I think the member for Niagara Falls had a bill similar to this in the past. So I doubt there is much disagreement on the principle that my colleague from Kingston and the Islands is trying to bring to the Legislature. It may be that it's a bill that should be discussed. Certainly I would welcome it if it were to come before the public accounts committee. We would have the opportunity to get input on the bill and bring to this Legislature the opportunity for accountability for some 75% of provincial expenditures.

So this morning when the vote is taken, I would encourage all members of the Legislature to support my colleague from Kingston and the Islands' Bill 5, which I think will vastly improve accountability to this Legislature for monies spent.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to share time again with the member from Halton, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance and was kind enough to allow us to make a few remarks with respect to Bill 5.

Bill 5 was introduced by Gerretsen in April 2001, just shortly after Mr Maves from Niagara Falls introduced the government's bill, which was widely accepted. I believe there is no one in this House on either side, perhaps with the exception of the NDP, who would not want to see accountability built into any mechanism of sharing funding—that is, taxpayers' money—with the partners, who have been referred to as the MUSH sector: municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals.

I can only refer to the efforts the government has made in working co-operatively, I might say, with the Provincial Auditor, Erik Peters. I'm a great supporter of our Provincial Auditor. I've come to know him through the public accounts committee and the estimates committee and have a lot of respect for him. I'm not in favour of an activist auditor; that is, one who politicizes the role, and I would not make that accusation of Mr Peters. I think it's a matter of keeping the politics out of it and the accountability in it.

1150

What measures has the government taken? If I refer to the budget that the Honourable Janet Ecker introduced just this week on the 17th—and I commend her for that, the fourth straight balanced budget. That's what the people want: they want accountability and they want us to spend within our means like you and I do in our homes.

I like the plan here on page 8 of the speech. It says, "Effective this year, our business planning process incorporates zero-based budgeting principles. Every min-

istry is now required to review all of its programs spending over a four-year cycle to determine program effectiveness, efficiency and value for money." That's what this is about.

If I look locally at my own riding, which is a very good place to start, you have to be very conscious of the fact that the key partners I'm referring to include real people—real people who I have a lot of respect for. I think immediately of the school boards. I think also of the measures at the local college, Durham College, and now, hopefully, the new University of Ontario, with Gary Polonsky and his staff, Don Hargest, who is the vice-president, I believe, in charge of finance. He's a very well educated, qualified person. They have built in mechanisms there that are a good start: the key performance indicators—the KPIs—student satisfaction, employer satisfaction and outcomes. I would caution the post-secondary group, though, that the idea of putting money in—sometimes some of the courses aren't really leading to effective job market skills for our young people, many of whom are here today.

I have a lot of respect for our municipal partners as well. I'd like to mention Mayor Mutton, whom I spoke with today about a measure before regional council yesterday on accountability, on spending taxpayers' money, and to Mayor Moffat as well, from Scugog township, who's also I believe a person who does want to be accountable to the taxpayers. I think there's unanimity here.

So I have great confidence in the auditor. I think they should have a role in making sure that there is wise use of taxpayers' money in the MUSH sectors—the municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals.

No one here, in my estimation, could speak against Bill 5, Mr Gerretsen's bill, as they didn't speak against Mr Maves's bill some time ago. So it's the right thing to do. I call on all members to pay close attention.

I also want to mention that there is a parliamentary committee called a program evaluation which is chaired by Julia Munro, which was mentioned in the budget, and on that committee are Frank Mazzilli, Marilyn Mushinski, Garfield Dunlop and Wayne Wettlaufer, all members who are going to work in partnership with the Provincial Auditor, along with Rob Sampson, the member from Mississauga Centre.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): It's a pleasure to speak on this bill, the Audit Amendment Act, that has been brought forward by my colleague from Kingston and the Islands.

There is a fundamental responsibility that I believe government must not only talk about but must act on. There has to be a political will to act on the mechanisms that ensure independent accountability. It's one thing to dictate and to suggest that accountability is only based on legislation that allows for—let's say you can't run a deficit. That's one thing. But this bill, in my opinion, deals with the more fundamental issue of allowing an independent audit of the sectors that expend billions of taxpayers' dollars and the whole issue of the public's

right to know how the public dollars are being spent, if they're being spent in a way that you are getting value for money and also if those dollars are being spent to meet the needs that are supposed to be provided by those services. All of those things to me are its fundamental responsibility on spending public dollars.

We talk about best practices. I am really pleased to hear that the members of the government are speaking in favour of this bill, because it is in my opinion what rebuilds credibility, if you want to call it, in the area of government. Because when we talk about the word "efficiency," when we talk about the word "accountability," no one disagrees. It is only through actions and the political will to make sure those actions are pursued that we really understand if there is a true intent to act on accountability.

One of the unfortunate aspects, in my opinion, is what we see in the electricity sector. When we talk about transparency and the right of the public to know, the electricity sector is a perfect example that unfortunately has been blanketed by a cloak of secrecy since 1999. The question is, why does that happen? How does that contribute to this whole notion of what accountability is all about?

It's important, in my opinion, to have the Audit Amendment Act because of the fact that we must have access, that the Provincial Auditor must have access to the financial records of these crown corporations, because they expend billions and billions of taxpayers' dollars.

I commend the member from Kingston and the Islands and support this bill.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): It's a great honour for me to have an opportunity to spend the final three minutes or so celebrating in the reflected glory of the member for Kingston and the Islands. It seems to me that this bill is really a motherhood bill. It is so rare on a Thursday morning that I might have the opportunity not only to share my remarks with this House, but to do so in accord with the member from Durham. It is a pleasure, a real honour, to have a chance for once to be on the same side of an issue as he is. I think this speaks to the fact that the principle of accountability is one that matters a whole lot to all of us regardless of where we might be in terms of our philosophical orientation.

The member for Kingston and the Islands has a well-established reputation in this place for this kind of work. He's one of those folks who does an awfully effective job of making quite certain that the tax dollars that are collected, the hard-won rewards of people for their work that are collected by government are spent effectively, and that's what this bill before us today is designed to do.

I think we also should all take an opportunity to celebrate the role the Provincial Auditor plays in ensuring that those of us who have the responsibility of governing, and especially those who have the responsibility of administering public dollars, do so in a way that is consistent with value for money in the delivery of services to the taxpayer.

As someone who tends to be a little more in support of activist government, it matters a lot to me that, as people in politics, we ensure that the dollars we collect from the taxpayer are spent well. I want to make sure those dollars that we fight for, that we talk about all the time in question period and other forums, are spent as effectively as possible.

We also all need to be honest and say that in the context of a \$65-billion budget, there is room for improvement. Everybody works hard to do an effective job of properly managing the trust the taxpayers provide, but when you're dealing with numbers like that, with the number of human fingerprints that come on \$65 billion worth of expenditures, I think it's easy to see—this bill is designed to ensure that the auditor, who serves us so well, has a broader range of opportunity to lend a little more guidance to us to ensure that the dollars we collect from taxpayers are being spent in the most effective and efficient way possible. I'm very honoured to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Kingston and the Islands has two minutes to respond.

1200

Mr Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to thank the members from Halton, Durham, Northumberland, Scarborough-Agincourt, Essex, Sarnia-Lambton, Toronto Centre-Rosedale and Sault Ste Marie for their kind words about the bill.

If I could say one thing about what the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale said, and chide and disagree with him just to some extent: this is not about motherhood; this is about real accountability. If it were about motherhood, it would have passed many, many years ago.

The ultimate test, should this bill pass at second reading, is what's going to happen to it next. Over the last 13 years, government after government of all three political stripes has given lip service to it. The ultimate test is, do they really want to put it into action? Of course, the reason for that is quite simple: no government likes to be criticized, and usually the reports from the Provincial Auditor criticize the management of some government services or departments. That's happened to all governments of different political stripes over the years. And let's be realistic about it: the more power you give the Provincial Auditor, the more likely it is to happen.

But ultimately we shouldn't be concerned about that. Ultimately we should be concerned about only one thing: is the money we collect as a government being expended in a wise, prudent and accountable fashion? That's what this speaks to. This speaks to the fact that all those funds—up to 60% or 70% of the money being transferred to our hospitals, universities, colleges, municipalities and all the other recipient agencies—are not being expended wisely.

They shouldn't feel threatened by this. As a matter of fact, they should welcome it as being the best way to

show the general public that they really want to spend the taxpayers' money in the best way possible.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for debate on ballot item number 52.

SKILLS TRAINING

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 51.

Mr Curling has moved private member's notice of motion number 6. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

AUDIT AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA VÉRIFICATION DES COMPTES PUBLICS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 52.

Mr Gerretsen has moved second reading of Bill 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 96, this bill will be referred to the committee of the whole House.

Mr Gerretsen: Mr Speaker, I request that the bill be referred to the standing committee on public accounts.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Gerretsen has asked that this bill be sent to the public accounts committee. Is it agreed? Agreed.

All matters relating to private members' public business now being complete, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1203 to 1330.

WEARING OF PINS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In recognition of Community Living Day in Ontario, and in recognition of all those who have joined us today in the Legislature, I would ask that unanimous consent be given to wear the Living Life, Living Proof pin.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Today in my city there was a significant community event. The Mine-Mill CAW union held its annual workers' memorial day service. This day is in recognition of the anniversary of the June 20, 1984, mine tragedy at Falconbridge. It's a day we spend remembering workers.

At 10:12 am there is a moment of silence. We not only remember Soolow Korpela, Richard Chenier, Daniel

Lavallee and Wayne St Michel, who died, we also reflect upon the good things in life we have, to plan for a better tomorrow and to remember our families and friends, those of us who have families and friends who have passed away tragically in the workplace.

We value life at this celebration and we remember the health and safety member commitment, which says, "Asking me to overlook a simple safety violation would be asking me to compromise my entire attitude toward the value of your life."

This is a significant community event. I was with them in spirit. This is the first one I have missed. We all know occupational health and safety is of utmost importance.

VOLUNTEERS IN SAULT STE MARIE

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I stand today to put before the House the wonderful contribution two citizens of my community have made over a number of years. These two people have recently retired and will be missed.

Carmen Borghese and Charlotte Mandolesi are exemplary in their commitment and contribution to their work and to the volunteer sector of Sault Ste Marie. Carmen was the executive director of the United Way, and Charlotte was the executive director of the volunteer bureau connected with the United Way. The very nature of their work should speak to all of us in terms of the commitment, time and energy both these people put into making our community better. Carmen, supported by his wonderful wife, Donna, and Charlotte by her husband, Richard, gave of their time without thought to themselves and contributed in ways that go above and beyond, both of them driven primarily by their faith, by their connection to their church and their belief in a higher purpose to the work we all do.

Today I stand to say to Carmen, Charlotte, Donna and Richard, all the best in your retirement, that you might have good health and fortune. You will be remembered.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent if we could wear, in the House, community living buttons supporting community living.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We already did that. It's totally acceptable.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Today I am particularly delighted to say hello to my friends in the gallery from the Ontario Association for Community Living. I also want to express the Ernie Eves government's support for people with developmental disabilities.

This was reflected most recently in Monday's budget, which follows through on the government's five-year, \$197-million plan and commitment to enhance services for people with intellectual disabilities. I'm very proud

that the Ernie Eves government is investing in the success of organizations like the Ontario Association for Community Living.

I am delighted to play a small role in promoting the very admirable goal of ensuring that every person in this province lives with dignity. This is a goal that the Ontario Association for Community Living has embraced and done much to bring about. I congratulate all the volunteers across our province for their inspired work and dedication.

The Ontario Association for Community Living has helped our communities for over 50 years. From their modest beginning, they have grown to more than 12,000 members in 100 local associations across Ontario. Their staff and volunteers have touched the lives of many people in each of our ridings. They deserve the praise of MPPs on all sides of the House.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): Three cheers for the Toronto public school board, whose trustees unanimously rejected the \$90 million of cuts foisted upon Toronto schools by the Harris-Eves government's broken funding formula and chronic underfunding. I stand four-square behind those courageous trustees and the thousands of families that have supported the Toronto school trustees' defiance of mediocrity.

A resounding boo to the Harris-Eves government for its preposterous funding formula and education policy that has forced the Toronto board into this unprecedented political statement.

To make matters worse, I learned last night at a Humewood school council meeting that Humewood will lose its vice-principal because enrolment at the school on one day last year fell one student short of the 450 students needed to qualify for a vice-principal, notwithstanding that the current enrolment is well above that mark. So the need for a vice-principal is there, but because of inflexible Tory formulae, the need is not met.

I'm told by families in this community that this kind of bizarre and ludicrous inflexibility in government criteria will likely mean the loss of important programs, like the lunchtime milk program, and less attention to disciplinary issues and disruptive behaviour typically handled by a vice-principal.

This led one constituent to write me, asking, "Can't we aim a little higher than the mediocrity that we are headed for? I have the highest standards and expectations for my children."

Well, so you do, say I, and so you should. So should our government, but it does not. So should the people tell this government to account, and so shall we for what they've done to Ontario classrooms and Ontario's working families.

SIBBALD POINT PROVINCIAL PARK

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I rise today to speak about one of Georgia's popular summer attractions,

Sibbald Point Provincial Park. Last year the park attracted 333,000 people. The park has more than 900 campsites; one of the longest public beaches on Lake Simcoe; picnic areas; boat launch facilities and rentals; hiking trails; docks for mooring, fishing and swimming; a store and restaurant; and the unique Eildon Hall museum. The most recent attraction is the Maidenhair Fern Trail, which opened last year.

The park is also headquarters for the Ministry of Natural Resources Lake Simcoe fisheries unit that studies the lake's fish population.

The park is going to promote more spring and fall use for those who have bigger trailer units. They are also planning to extend the season past Thanksgiving to mid-November. This move would likely attract more retirees who travel around Canada and the United States in the bigger trailer units.

Sibbald Park also hosts many special events. This weekend, the annual fundraising law enforcement ride for the prevention of child abuse will take place on Saturday, June 22. About 200 police officers will take part in the motorcycle ride. Other events include Canada Day celebrations on July 1, a family fishing weekend on July 6-7 and the historical ghost walk at Eildon Hall on July 17.

This provincial park is part of our government's Living Legacy program, where we have added more parkland than any government in this province. This legacy is something that will live on for future generations to enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of our province.

1340

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Last fall I rose in the Legislature to question then Labour Minister Chris Stockwell about the alarming number of cases of silicosis that were occurring in the Hemlo gold mines in my riding. While I much appreciated the minister's response to me and his visit to Marathon to meet with affected workers, I feel compelled to rise once again to call for more serious action by this government related to this disturbing and serious problem.

The fact is we have a clear disagreement between the ministry, represented by the WSIB, and the affected workers, represented by their doctors, as to whether silicosis is the correct diagnosis. As a result, workers are left in a frightening state of limbo, with no real guarantee that they will receive needed and appropriate benefits. Clearly, simple humanity requires that this be resolved. Regardless of the diagnosis, these are people who have clearly contacted an occupational disease as a result of their work in the mines.

In an attempt to resolve this issue, I am calling on Labour Minister Clark today to convene a public inquiry into the situation at Hemlo. We need to get to the truth as to what is happening there, something that I hope the

minister would agree is necessary. It seems to me that an inquiry may be the only way to find that truth, but regardless, these workers should not be left in the lurch. Therefore, I'm also calling on Minister Clark to enact legislation such as recently has been done in Manitoba for firefighters that recognizes the prevalence of specific occupational diseases to which miners may fall prey. Surely, the least we can do is to provide these hard-working people with appropriate benefits if they become ill without asking them to fight the system in order to get that help.

ASSOCIATIONS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House today to introduce my colleagues to the representatives from the Central Seven Association for Community Living who are in attendance. They are participating in Community Living Day here at Queen's Park.

By way of background, the association began in 1967, when a group of parents and friends got together to operate a school on Scugog Island for children with developmental disabilities. Today, some 30-plus years later, Central Seven staff, board and volunteers offer supportive independent living programs, group homes, family programs, day programs, job development and respite services.

Unfortunately, time does not permit me to mention each guest; however, I would like to commend the president of the board, Pam Domingos, and the board executive, including director Glenn Taylor, the staff and volunteers.

I'd also like to pay tribute to the Oshawa/Clarington Association for Community Living. Next year, the association celebrates its 50th year. Like Central Seven, it was started by parents who knew their sons and daughters would live in the community with supports. Their parents and friends worked to make a dream reality. I commend William Carson, president of the board of directors, the board members, executive director Steve Finlay, staff, parents and volunteers responsible for the success of this association. For almost 50 years, Community Living in Oshawa-Clarington has worked to support individuals as they live, learn, work and participate fully in our community.

I trust that, in addition to raising awareness, today is also a time to recognize the progress that has been made to ensure Ontario is a place where everyone belongs. We must rededicate ourselves to continuing the advancement of this worthy cause. I thank the staff, the parents and the individuals involved here for making life better for those with developmental disabilities.

WORKPLACE FATALITIES

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): Pat Dillon, business manager of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, and I are out-

raged that Halton region is considering a bid by North America Construction Ltd to upgrade the Kelso pumping station in Milton. The company was recently convicted of negligence in the death of two construction workers by the Ontario Court for operating unsafe construction equipment.

On May 27, 2002, North America Construction Ltd of Campbellville, Ontario, was found guilty of using defective or hazardous equipment contrary to the regulations for construction projects and section 25 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Court documents from the trial indicate that the crane being used by North America Construction at the mid-Halton waste water project in June 2000 was "in a defective or hazardous condition."

The \$220,000 fine given to this company last month in the death of Darren Leon and Jose Alves amounted to a slap on the wrist for one of Canada's largest municipal water treatment and sewage plant contractors. The contract for this project alone was worth an estimated \$2 million.

Minister, are we going to allow these companies to get away with murder? Corporate directors of these companies should be forced to take direct responsibility for these workplace deaths. They should not be allowed to plea bargain for reduced sentences and insignificant fines. Fines must be harsh to force companies to comply with the existing health and safety regulations. Fines like the one handed down to North American Construction aren't a deterrent; they simply represent the cost of doing business.

Halton region should look into these deaths and consider whether they award these future contracts.

FEDERAL HEALTH SPENDING

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): First, I'd like to extend my congratulations to my son, Spencer, and his classmates, who are graduating tonight from Miss Carr and Miss Jen's Little Peoples Nursery School. I'm sorry I can't be there.

The federal Liberal finance minister, John Manley, delivered an economic statement yesterday reiterating a federal surplus of \$6 billion for last year. Not surprisingly, there was an indication that the surplus this year will be higher, but no indication on how the money will be spent. Unfortunately, one thing we can always count on is the federal Liberal government's consistent disregard for Ontario's health care system.

I'd like to reiterate some facts. In 1993, the Mulroney federal Tory government contributed 18 cents toward every dollar spent on health care in Ontario. The federal Liberals decreased that funding to 11 cents out of every dollar. Only recently have the Liberals started to increase their share. It's now at about 14 cents out of every dollar. Let's remember that health care was once funded 50-50 between the federal government and the provinces.

Despite being shortchanged by the federal Liberal government, Ontario's finance minister, Janet Ecker, is

this year's budget announced an increased investment in health care of \$1.7 billion, for a grand total of \$25.5 billion, the highest in provincial history. Hospital funding is again being increased, as are long-term-care funding and funding for nurse practitioners.

Congratulations, Janet Ecker. Shame on John Manley.

VISITORS

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I'd like to introduce the family of page Mackenzie Green: mom Gina Green, dad Tim Green, sister Madison Green, and grandpa Carl Pettifer. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): While we are introducing our honoured guests, we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery Mr Jesse Flis, a former member of Parliament for the riding of Parkdale-High Park. Mr Flis is here today with a group from Community Living. Please join me in welcoming our colleague.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I beg leave to present a report on the operations division, Ministry of the Environment, from the standing committee on public accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to thank the staff, the researchers, the Clerk's department for being involved in the writing of the report, as well as the auditor's office.

There are eight recommendations in the report. If I could refer to two of them, it states that "The Ministry of the Environment should conduct an assessment at the earliest possible time of the integrated divisional system" in order to determine the system's ability to determine whether or not certificates of approval need to be updated with conditions and requirements.

Another recommendation states that "The Ministry of the Environment should assess its risk, review, and inspection coverage for the period 2001-03" so that corrective action to improve inspection coverage to reduce the range of its environmental risk can be taken.

I should point out one other aspect as well, and that is simply the following statement that's contained in the report, that "the members were in unanimous agreement that the ministry has been less than forthright in responding to certain requests for supplementary information."

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

COMMUNITY LIVING DAY

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe there's unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to help celebrate Community Living Day.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to recognize Community Living Day in the Legislature. I'd particularly like to recognize the representatives from Community Living Tillsonburg for being here to help us celebrate the day and taking time from their most important activities to not only show us what they do and tell us what they do, but to show us the support they need to keep doing it.

1350

This is a day to celebrate the unique abilities of people with developmental disabilities in this province. It's a day to recognize the efforts and commitments of families, volunteers and professionals, all of whom make a difference in the lives of adults and children with developmental disabilities.

I've had the privilege to meet many individuals with these disabilities and their families, and I'm amazed by the challenges they face and conquer on a daily basis. That's why I take very seriously our government's commitment to provide people with developmental disabilities and their families the support they need to live lives of dignity and inclusion.

Our government has recently made the single largest investment in developmental services in our province's history. In May 2001, we introduced a multi-year plan that promised to put an additional \$197 million into the sector by 2006-07 and another \$67 million in capital over five years to create new spaces for these people to live in the community. From this multi-year plan, our government has already spent \$55 million to help people receive the supports they need and an additional \$5 million to create more homes in their communities. We are continuing to build on last year's investment by providing an additional \$48.6 million to further strengthen the system of supports and \$15.4 million to continue to create living accommodations that will help people live independently.

With the increased funding, we are committing over \$1 billion per year in programs and services that support children and adults with developmental disabilities to reach their full potential. Our goal is to help people become as independent as possible, living at home in their own communities and participating as much as possible in the day-to-day life of the community. This is your government's goal, because it's what the people with developmental disabilities and their families have told us they want. We also continue to work with those involved in developmental services to find the best ways to achieve that goal.

Guided by what we've heard from people with developmental disabilities and the people who provide

them with care and support, much of the increased spending in developmental services is being used for services in the community. This includes creating new living spaces in the community as well as expanding community-based services such as daycare programs, special services at home and out-of-home respite care.

Today we recognize that people with developmental disabilities provide significant contributions to their communities, and that they and their families need a wide range of services and supports to do this. Your government has taken many steps to ensure the needed supports continue to be there.

The financial investment this government has made in developmental services is a remarkable demonstration of its commitment to supporting vulnerable people in this province. This government has also demonstrated its sensitivity to the stigma that language can pose for people with disabilities. That is why last year the government proclaimed legislation that changed the wording in more than 30 acts government-wide to remove language that is outdated and offensive to people with these disabilities, their families and the support workers.

Legislation ensuring the health, safety and personal well-being of people has been preserved in the Developmental Services Act, which was proclaimed in 1974. This government is committed to ensuring that people with developmental disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and are able to participate as full members of society.

Community Living Day is the ideal time for us to help raise awareness of how we all benefit when people with developmental disabilities are fully included in the day-to-day life of our communities. I want to again say thank you to all who are here for Community Living Day and to assure them that our government will continue to work with them to further the cause of community living across the province of Ontario. Thank you for all the hard work you do on behalf of citizens in the province and for making life better for all our citizens.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): It is a great honour for me to rise today on behalf of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, and all the members of the Ontario Liberal caucus to speak to this unanimous consent motion as we proudly recognize June 20 as Community Living Day in Ontario.

We welcome our guests from Community Living Ontario as well as the many representatives from across the province who have dedicated themselves to the belief that independence, inclusion and dignity for all our citizens are rights worth fighting for. I applaud you for your constant commitment to battle for equal treatment for people with intellectual disabilities.

As a member of the Legislature with a brother who lives independently, thanks to the services provided by the Lakehead Association for Community Living, I feel a particular kinship with the front-line staff who work with my brother Mark and all the sons and daughters and brothers and sisters that member agencies all across the province have in their care.

These are very special people. They do indeed provide care and support to people like my brother, but they do so much more. They truly live the mantra of community living by understanding the special needs and aspirations of all those in their care. They encourage and support their development, help them through crises, and they do it with humour, dedication and grace. On behalf of all of us in the Legislature, I take my hat off to them and deeply thank them.

Having said that, I call upon the minister and the government today to recognize that these front-line workers continue to be undervalued by this government. If you truly value the work, then you must value the workers. Unless the government is prepared to properly compensate these dedicated individuals and to bring them into the consultation process, we will sadly continue to see many of them forced to leave the community living sector they love so much.

I would be remiss if I did not also pay special tribute today to the self-advocate councils all across the province. These proud and brave people know what their needs are and they proudly fight for the rights of all those with intellectual and physical disabilities who, quite simply, are justified in demanding full inclusion in our society.

While there are countless individuals across the province who deserve special recognition for their tireless efforts, I trust you'll understand if I pay particular tribute to two people in Thunder Bay who represent the best in self-advocacy: Jenny Pak, who heads up the self-advocates' council in Thunder Bay, and Donald Casgrain, a hard-working member of the board of the Lakehead Association for Community Living. We thank them for their dedication to the cause of community living.

However, while today we celebrate the achievements of many people and acknowledge, as one, the importance of inclusion, independence and dignity under the umbrella of community living, we must also acknowledge that there is much left that we must do if we intend to put real meaning behind our words.

Last week in the Legislature we all had an opportunity to support a cost-of-living adjustment for those living on the Ontario disability support program. The fact is that people with disabilities are facing increasing hardships because of rapidly escalating costs of food, shelter, clothing and utilities, and with no real increase in their benefits since 1987. It is difficult to understand how a cost-of-living adjustment to their benefits could not be justified and strongly supported by this government, yet last week, when the opportunity presented itself, government members rejected this simple request. Quite frankly, I say to the member who spoke, your words today seem quite hollow in light of your continued resistance to this most basic need for support.

There are many other needs that must be met in the developmental services sector. With a waiting list across the province of almost 9,000 people needing services and support, a situation that will only worsen over the next 20

years as the baby boom generation of parents reaches an age when many more families must access community support, we strongly demand that the government acknowledge this by committing to increased investment in this sector. This means funding must be equally allocated to new services, as well as revitalization. It means funding must be distributed so as to ensure equity across the province. It means our workers must not continue to be compensated at a level 25% lower than those employed directly by the government. It means a clear and sensitive policy related to individualized services and funding to those who desire it.

In order to put meaning behind our words today, we must also move more quickly to take the final steps to close all remaining institutions in this province. Once again, it's difficult to tout our belief in the value of community living when we still have over 1,100 people residing in the three remaining institutions in this province. This government must accelerate its plan to close all schedule 1 institutions. As long as they remain open, inclusion, independence and dignity are simply being denied to those people forced to live in these institutions.

There is little doubt that the challenges in the developmental service sector are many and the obstacles are great. For my part, I would like to envision a day when government support to this sector is not defined by political need, but by the actual needs of those in our communities. In the spirit of all that we honour here today, and as part of this celebration of the true meaning of community living, I call on the minister and this government to genuinely commit to working toward that end. The fact is that nothing less than a full commitment to the goal of equal access for all those seeking independence, dignity and full inclusion in our society will do.

1400

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I am very proud to stand here today to speak in honour of the important contribution community living associations, their staff and volunteers make to our society and the lives of a very special group of Ontario citizens.

When you look back at the treatment of people with developmental disabilities 55 years ago, you can't help but shudder. Almost all were institutionalized, and the idea of their education and potential was not even considered. Most were forced to live very lonely lives shut away from the world.

This all began to change in 1947 in Kirkland Lake, where a teacher pulled together families of six developmentally disabled children, believing that life could offer these children more and that these children could offer the world more. From there, groups began to form across this province. And thanks to these very dedicated people fighting for the rights of the disabled, we have seen great improvements.

People have a right to live a fully integrated life within their community regardless of whether or not they have a disability. People with disabilities have the same right as any of us in this Legislature to live, go to school, work,

enjoy recreation and leisure, and be active in their retirement.

I would like to read a quote from the vision statement for the Community Living Association. Their vision is an Ontario where "all persons live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community, and have the opportunity to participate effectively." They envision a society where everyone belongs, has equality, respect and acceptance. They believe all people should have access to adequate income and quality health care. This is a vision that makes me proud. It is a vision that made me enter politics. It is exactly these principles that I and the rest of my NDP colleagues come to work every day to fight for.

We have come a long way since 1947 with regard to our treatment of the developmentally disabled. The day of warehouse-style institutions is a thing of the past. Thanks to community living associations and their work, more developmentally disabled people are able to live independently. But the struggle for a fully integrated life is far from over. And the need for more government supports continues to be essential.

There is a crisis in this province when it comes to support for adult children with developmental disabilities. We're facing a serious issue as parents are aging and looking at a future where they will no longer be around to help care for their wonderful children. These parents are facing great fear through what should be their time of rest and retirement not knowing what will happen to their children. We are also facing a serious issue as children reach the age of 21 and are no longer able to attend high school.

Parents are facing horrific decisions because of the lack of government support. Without proper day programs or individualized funding for caregivers, parents are being forced to quit their jobs to take care of their adult children. I've received calls from mothers who have been forced to quit their jobs and go on social assistance because they cannot get the support they need to assist them with the care of their adult children. These are dedicated parents who truly understand their child's right to a full and inclusive life and have spent every day fighting for that. Their children bring such joy to their lives, but they are also tired, and it is our responsibility as government to make sure they have the support they need.

People with developmental disabilities have so much to offer the world. With our support they can rise to full participation in their communities. They can live on their own, they can work, they can teach and they can help make our communities more vibrant places.

We've come a long way since 1947, but we still have a long way to go. And I really hope that everyone in this House today does more than offer nice words. I hope that every one of us offers a real commitment to improving the services that are desperately needed to complement the great work already being done by parents, volunteers, workers and community living associations across this province.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is it appropriate that earlier today the member

for St Paul's, who is an elected official and a member of this duly elected assembly, a lawyer and an officer of the court, should have been advocating, indeed encouraging any individual or group to break the statutes of this province—

The Speaker: Order. It's not a point of order. As you know, the Speaker has no control over that area.

ORAL QUESTIONS

INCOME TAX

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): To the Minister of Finance: in the next few days the Legislature will be passing the budget bill, I gather. A major part of that is an amendment to the Taxpayer Protection Act to delay the planned cuts in personal income tax that were due January 1, 2003, to January 1, 2004. On behalf of the taxpayers, I'd like to get some estimate of what the impact of that will be. The calculation we've done is from page 96 of the budget, which indicates that for the taxation year 2003 the total increase in taxes that would be paid to the province would range between \$930 million and \$1 billion as a result of this move. Is that the correct calculation, Minister?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I'm sorry I didn't hear the last part of your question, which you could maybe clarify in the supplementary. But what we have done in this budget, as we've said clearly, is take a look at the difficult choices we faced here in Ontario because of the significant economic downturn because of the events of September 11. We took a couple of steps to make sure that at the end of this fiscal year and next year in the forecast we would be able to continue to have balanced budgets, that we would continue to have new investments for health care, education and a safe and clean environment, that we would continue to take steps for future growth and prosperity; for example, the tax cut for small business, which will be continuing as it should. Some of the tax cuts we have delayed for one year, which just helps in the total picture to meet the priorities we felt were the most important for the people of Ontario.

Mr Phillips: Actually, that didn't come close to an answer to the question. The question is quite straightforward and I'm sure you have the calculation. The people of Ontario had been promised a cut in personal income tax. In fact it was in the legislation, the Taxpayer Protection Act. You've decided to delay that for a year so that in the year 2003 the personal income tax will be quite different.

The calculation you've done in the budget shows that for the first three months of the taxation year you will increase your revenue by about \$230 million. That's for the first three months. For the entire year, therefore, the calculation will be somewhere around \$930 million, up to \$1 billion. That is how much more in personal income taxes people in Ontario will pay once you pass this

legislation. Before the legislation it's this; then it's \$1 billion higher. Is that the correct calculation, Minister?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I'm sure the honourable member can calculate things in many different ways. I'd be quite happy to have our staff sit down and go over the numbers again with him, if he'd like. But what I think is important for us to all restate, because it is indeed very true, is that Ontario taxpayers benefit from an \$11-billion tax relief program every year. They continue to benefit from that. They will continue to benefit from future tax decreases, as we promised. Small business taxes are down in this particular budget. Some 50,000 more individuals will be coming off the tax rolls at the modest income level, because we think it's the right thing to do. The mining tax rate is down. The diesel fuel tax exemption is in this budget. So we are continuing with our tax cut agenda, as we know we should, because the record is very clear: it works.

Mr Phillips: Again, I think the Minister of Finance should provide the people of Ontario with a clear answer. We are being asked essentially to throw out the Taxpayer Protection Act. The calculation we've done—if it's incorrect, you give us the right one—says people in Ontario will pay about \$1 billion more in personal income tax in the tax year 2003 if this goes through. Now, it was you who passed the legislation, has given the tax break, and now you want to cancel it. I simply want to know on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario, Minister of Finance, is it roughly \$1 billion dollars of increased revenue to the province of Ontario as a result of deciding that you are not going to proceed with the tax cut that you promised in the Taxpayer Protection Act?

1410

Hon Mrs Ecker: Well, the honourable member can try to fudge the issue as much as he wants. There is no cancellation of taxes. There is no throwing out, as he says, of the Taxpayer Protection Act; quite the contrary. We are continuing with a tax cut agenda because it is the right thing to do, because it has helped us increase jobs and growth in this province. This budget actually indeed has further tax decreases, and future budgets will have even more tax relief. Right now, Ontarians will continue to benefit from \$11 billion in tax relief that this government supported, and you voted against every single one of those tax cuts. When it came to the crunch, did you care about low-income families, did you care about those people who were working so hard to succeed? No. They voted against every tax cut, and I suspect they're going to continue to vote against every future tax cut that this government continues to bring forward.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education. I want to ask you about the way that the budget just passed is failing urban schools and urban students. What I want to ask you about, Minister, is—for example, in Toronto over 1,000 parents attended a meeting of that school board, where

they decided they were obliged to pass a budget that reflected the real needs of those urban students. Thousands more parents have written to you from places like Waterloo, Ottawa, London and Windsor, and they're basically telling you of the needs that have to be met.

In the gallery today is a parent, Andrea Reynolds. She's with Dundas school. At that school, they've got a parenting program, and it brings in the parents, most of whom are from other countries, ahead of time, for their children to do better, for the parents to learn English. Then at noon they are feeding them.

They're saying to you that academic excellence can only exist in the public school system if it's responsive to social needs. Do you agree with that, Minister? Will you change your mind and will you follow our plan and help urban students?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): The member opposite again is confusing fact with fiction. I understand there were not the number of people present last night that he claims there were. I have it on a very reliable source that it was considerably less. I understand that many of the people in the audience were indeed employees of the school board. So I think it's important that we set the record straight. I think it's also very important to remember that our government has moved forward in a way that we want to make sure that all students in this province, whether they live in cities or towns or villages, or north or east or rural, have the same equal opportunity for services. That's why we introduced the funding formula, and that's why we have announced an additional \$557 million since our Premier took over.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, I feel bad that you didn't feel fit to address either the parent who is here, and everyone else, who's going to lose a parenting program that has been important for her kids; they're both here today. They benefited from that. Other children in that school badly need this program. It will be cut, Minister, unless you respond.

You also chose not to respond to the quote about social needs being responded to. Minister, you said that in December 1986. You said that, talking about the needs of your local school board.

We are obviously a long time from the 1980s. There are boards, like yours then, struggling to meet the needs of their students. Either there's monumental arrogance on your part today, and you are saying you can think on behalf of all those school boards, or you will respond to the needs of people with special requirements, the urban requirements that these programs at Dundas school represent, you'll help address some of the cost differentials and you'll help remove some of the anxiety that is there for parents?

At one time you were in favour of it—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our government introduced the student-focused funding model exactly because we were concerned about the social needs of students in this province. We wanted to make sure that all students had

equality of opportunity to receive the same support. Today, we are paying \$1.37 billion.

We also have heard the concerns, and that's why we've set up the Rozanski report, in order that we can make sure the students in this province who do have special needs and need the additional help are receiving the adequate support they need.

Mr Kennedy: I'm glad to be able to give you another chance because it's obvious you lost badly at the cabinet table. You got less money for schools this year than your predecessor got from her predecessor last year.

When you were a school board chair, Minister, and you were facing the same issues that the Toronto, Ottawa and Waterloo boards are—Waterloo cutting 23 special-education assistants—what did you do? You increased taxes. In 1986 you increased them 6.6%, in 1987 7.6%, in 1989 9.3%. But you stand here today and you won't respond.

I want to ask you again, will you take another look at our plan? It will make a down payment on the needs of urban students, on the students at Dundas school, Stephen and Edward, who are here today, and the rest of those students who will have their services and their education cut unless you become responsible, unless you become an advocate on behalf of education. Will you do that today, Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member opposite is a joke. Do you know what he's pointed out today? He's pointed out very clearly that when the Liberals were in power there were a lot of funding problems.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING PLANTS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, you've got a bit of a problem here. Tomorrow, the Minister of the Environment will be addressing the smog summit involving all three levels of government, but his outrageous comments yesterday undermined any credibility the government might have hoped to have on this issue. The minister said that OPG coal plants are practically insignificant as a source of smog.

As a former Minister of the Environment, you know that those plants produce about 20% of the smog in Ontario, smog that costs 1,900 lives and \$1 billion a year. I want to ask you, do you agree with the Minister of the Environment that these plants are insignificant?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Mr Speaker, I'll refer that to the Minister of the Environment.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): In our airshed there are two coal-fired plants operated by the province of Ontario. There are 200 operated in the United States.

The 200 that are operating in the United States—it's not even a question of closing them down. They're continuing to build coal-fired plants. The fact is, I'm not suggesting that the two coal-fired plants in the province of Ontario aren't important; of course they are. But the

reality is that we need a concerted effort, much like the Great Lakes cleanup, in order to negotiate with the federal government of the United States to stop building and stop operating the coal-fired plants, because two against 200, which was the comparison I made, seems slightly insignificant when you're talking about that number of coal-fired plants in the United States.

Ms Churley: You seem to be using that as an excuse to not take care of the people of Ontario, which is your job, to deal with the coal plants in Ontario.

Minister, you should listen here because the NDP's accountable public power plan is a viable plan that would replace coal with natural gas and renewable power. Even your Tory-dominated select committee on alternative fuels says we should phase out coal by 2015. Nanticoke, to take one example, is the biggest polluter in all of Canada and that is within your jurisdiction. But you will not say you'll take action and, outrageously, you continue to allow OPG to crank up power exports on smog days. You're making asthma worse so that Americans can run their air conditioners. Minister, will you at least tell OPG to stop exports on smog days?

1420

Hon Mr Stockwell: First of all, when you and the band of socialists had the levers of power between 1990 and 1995, you didn't close one coal-fired plant. You continued to operate the coal-fired plants.

I put to the member from Vaughan that they also didn't close the coal-fired plants when they were operating the government. I put to the member opposite that if we closed the coal-fired plants, people would be without electricity; it's that simple. Obviously no one in this House would support blackouts for people in this province—they would have no electricity. That would be the result of closing the coal-fired plants.

Having said that, what's the solution? We have to increase the capacity, increase the adequacy levels, increase the supply of power in Ontario. This government is doing that. Bruce A is going to come on. We've got one going forward in Sarnia and another one in southwestern Ontario. We've got Pickering coming on stream. The best way to get rid of coal-fired plants is to try alternatives. We're letting green power on the grid. The only government that lets wind power or solar power on the grid is this government: a prudent, planned, natural approach to dealing with the coal-fired plants and pollution. We've done something about it—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Ms Churley: Minister, you have not done anything about it; indeed you've made it worse. And with the privatization of Hydro, it will continue to get worse. For heaven's sake, even a NAFTA agency on the environment is now saying that electricity privatization is a recipe for more pollution and smog. That's what's happened in the US.

Your government got rid of the energy efficiency and conservation programs the NDP brought in. Smog has gotten worse under your government. If you sell the coal

plants, they will be run full blast to serve the US market and they'll never be shut down. The exports we make now will look small compared to what will happen then and our air will continue to get dirtier and dirtier.

Minister, will you stop the privatization of our coal plants so our children's asthma does not continue to get worse? If you don't, it's on your head.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, the privatization she talked about—the deregulation of the generating side—what has it produced? It's produced TransAlta in Sarnia, 44 megawatts of power; ATCO Power, 580 megawatts; OPG in Pickering, 2,000 megawatts; Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative, WindShare turbine project; OPG/British Energy, Huron Wind project.

What are you talking about? You didn't provide one—not one—green source of power when you were in government. You studied it, you talked, you did nothing. This government that is good to the greens in this province is this government. We've given them an opportunity to put their power on the grid, we've given them an opportunity to make some money in the system and we've given the people of this province a choice. They can choose coal-fired plants, that we're working hard to get rid of, or they can choose green power, and this government supports green power not just with words but with action.

ONTARIO RENTAL HOUSING TRIBUNAL

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today the Advocacy Centre for Tenants, a legal clinic specializing in tenants' issues, issued a report documenting how the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal has become a literal eviction machine. They want the Ombudsman of this province to investigate, because they say the tribunal fails the most basic standards of justice—not only the tribunal, but the act itself.

Madam Deputy Premier, tenants are being thrown out on the street because your tribunal and the law that give them the authority do not allow them to have a fair hearing. Will you commit to reforming the tribunal to make it fairer to tenants, and will you do so by July 1st this year?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'll refer that to the associate minister.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'd like to thank the member opposite for my first opposition question.

It needs to be made clear that since the creation of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal in 1998, our government has dramatically improved the service to tenants and landlords. Under the creation of the Tenant Protection Act four years ago, landlords and tenants have had better service to hear their cases quicker and in a more timely manner. With the previous system, it would take up to nine weeks for a hearing to be heard. With the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal hearings, they are being heard within 23 days. The timelines of having a hearing

are important to ensure that both landlords and tenants are being treated fairly under the Tenant Protection Act.

Mr Prue: Minister, the tribunal's own statistics say that 58% of all applications for eviction are decided without the tribunal having heard from the tenant. Some 118,000 people weren't even heard from. These are default orders. They arise because the tenants, number one, don't get the notices; two, don't understand the notices; and three, can't act within five days. Also they have no faith in the system. Evictions are events that can ruin people's lives. What are you going to do to fix the unfair process so that the tenants actually get the information and can show up to the hearings?

Hon Mrs Molinari: I want to clarify some of the facts, or lack of facts, that were presented here today. Out of 118,000 notices, 89,000 got remediation, and that needs to be made clear. In many cases the ORHT uses mediation to resolve disputes prior to an actual hearing before an adjudicator. The role of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal adjudicator is to listen to both sides in the tenant and landlord dispute and to come up with resolutions to the matter. It is the responsibility of both the landlord and the tenant to make every effort to be prepared to present at the hearings.

We have increased the service. Our toll-free lines and Web site address landlords' questions and concerns. The toll-free line is 1-888-332-3234. I would encourage the member opposite to access it.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING PLANTS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Deputy Premier. Today many parts of Ontario are in the midst of yet another smog advisory, and I think we can anticipate, with the arrival of hot and humid weather conditions—

Members pounding on desks.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Take your seat; you'll get your time back.

Don't start that or he'll throw you out. Don't start that.

Member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: Today many parts of Ontario are in the midst of another smog advisory. I think we can anticipate that, with the hot and humid weather coming, we will get worse situations as the summer progresses. Coal-fired generating plants in Ontario, such as Canada's number one polluter, the Nanticoke plant near Hamilton, make an enormous contribution to smog. Your government has direct control over these sources, these five coal-fired plants in Ontario.

There are two things I think the government can do to make an immense difference to air quality in Ontario. One is to commit today to the conversion of all coal-fired generating stations to natural gas, and the second is to direct Ontario Power Generation to stop its non-emergency coal-fired electricity exports to the USA during smog alerts in Ontario. One is longer term; the second can be done immediately.

Minister, will you take these two specific actions that are completely under the control of the government of Ontario?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'll refer it to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

Interjection.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I appreciate the compliment from the member for Windsor.

Interjection: Windsor West.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Windsor West. Sorry. I don't want to confuse the two.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, I didn't get it from you; that's for sure.

I want to say to the member opposite, as I said to my friend from Beaches, I believe—

Interjection: Toronto-Danforth.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Toronto-Danforth. We need to go about finding a supply. When you were in government, when they were in government, there were coal-fired plants. The reason the coal-fired plants weren't shut down was because if we shut them down, we would actually put people in a blackout situation in this province. None of us want that. Obviously we can't put people in blackout situations. There are medical reasons, a whole pile of good reasons. So what we have to do is find supply. We've got to put more supply in the system. If we have an oversupply situation, then we can deal with phasing the coal-fired plants out. Until that happens, you can't really deal with coal-fired plants.

Interjection.

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Hon Mr Stockwell: That's why it takes a while. The member for Vaughan-King-Aurora is right. But we've got Sarnia up and running with TransAlta, ATCO Power in Windsor, OPG in Pickering, Toronto renewable resources, British Energy. Those are the situations—we've got to get these things on grid, so we can then make a decision based on coal-fired plants.

Mr Bradley: To the Deputy Premier again, you can see from the answer given by the Minister of Energy and Environment that there's a conflict of interest in his two positions. As Minister of Energy, he has an obligation, as he states justifiably in the House, to provide as much power to the people of Ontario as cheaply as possible. As Minister of the Environment, his obligation is to ensure that we have clean, breathable air in Ontario. In my view, the minister does not have an objective opportunity to reduce air pollutants in Ontario—because one is a conflicting interest against the other—despite the fact that the Ontario Medical Association says there are 1,900 premature deaths per year, \$1 billion in health costs and \$10 billion in overall costs from smog in Ontario.

So I ask the Deputy Premier, does she not believe that having the Minister of Energy and the Minister of the Environment be the same person is an inherent conflict of interest and that that should be ended right away?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Inherently, what's the best thing any Minister of the Environment could do? The best thing they could do is this: they could find alternative sources for power. I'm doing that. I'm looking for alternative sources for power. We're the only government that let green power on the grid. My friends on the left didn't do it. My friends on the left—and sometimes right, sometimes middle, sometimes left—they didn't do it either. So the fact remains that the only government that has gone out and attracted renewable, clean, green power is the good Conservatives of the province, not the bad socialists or the bad Liberals. We're the ones who went out and did that.

Furthermore, you're making the suggestion about 20% of responsibility. Pollution Probe and the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy have been reporting—

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): You should use your blue box.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That was a good one—93% of the smog emissions in the province come from sources other than Ontario; 7% come from Ontario.

We've got to get the federal Liberals on side. We've got to start negotiating with the Americans. They've got to shut down those 200 coal-fired plants out there that are polluting our province.

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I understand that during debate last night in the House, the member for Nickel Belt was assailing our government's handling of the heritage fund. In fact, I understand that over the past week the leader of the third party has also been directing very serious allegations in the same regard.

Having read the excellent news release your office issued yesterday, I can't understand where the member is coming from. I know that the heritage fund remains a vital force for economic development and job creation in northern Ontario. For the benefit of those members who are still confused, can you please clarify what happens to the heritage fund monies that are not disbursed in a given year?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I thank my colleague for the question. I want to be very clear, particularly for the member for Nickel Belt, who seems very confused about this issue: actual northern Ontario heritage fund disbursements to northern projects are not the same as the annual provincial contribution of some \$60 million to the fund. Given the large number of projects funded, especially major capital initiatives, there is naturally a time lag between the approval and the completion of projects. Project funding flows once the client has submitted expenditure statements and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has verified the eligibility of the claims. This is called due diligence. Ensuring this level of due diligence and accountability for taxpayers' dollars is

precisely why the Provincial Auditor has consistently given the northern Ontario heritage fund his endorsement.

Unspent money in the fund will not be reallocated, as was the case in 1995, when the NDP government took \$60 million from the fund and put it into general government revenues. It was our government, in 1996, that replaced that \$60 million plus \$5 million in interest for the time the NDP had stolen the money out of the fund.

Mr Dunlop: Minister, thank you very much for that clarification. I do hope the two members opposite fully understand the seriousness of their allegations.

You very briefly mentioned the budget. Again, I'm very pleased as a member of this caucus that this is our fourth balanced budget in a row. We're very, very proud of that. Could you expand upon what budget initiatives will benefit rural and northern Ontario?

Hon Mr Wilson: Thank you very much, colleague. The budget was a good news budget for northern Ontario. There are a lot of significant and unique items in the budget specifically for the north and rural parts of the province: an additional \$10 million in annual operating funds to northern and rural colleges; support for northern universities, with an additional \$6 million in annual operating funding. It was announced that consultations would begin regarding the introduction of tax-free opportunity bonds; also, consultations on tax incentive zones to allow smaller and more remote communities like the north to enjoy the advantages of economic growth experienced in larger urban centres.

The budget also reaffirmed the commitment of free tuition for doctors who will practise in under-serviced areas, doubling the number of nurse practitioners, establishing a new medical school in Thunder Bay and Sudbury, the continual reduction of the mining tax, a reduction of the capital tax and a continuation of our record \$1.3 billion on money—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Attorney General. Today is the second anniversary of the slaying of Gillian Hadley. Gillian is one of the over 40 Ontario women who are murdered each year by a husband or partner. A jury of Ontario citizens deliberated for two weeks on evidence they heard over 42 days and, on February 8, presented this government with 58 recommendations which will help save lives.

Four years ago, the jury from the May-Iles inquest presented similar recommendations. Vulnerable women in Ontario remain unable to gain this government's attention. Six months ago in Hamilton, Tamara Helen MacInnis, 31, a mother of three children, was bludgeoned to death in her home by her husband. In the Premier's own riding, on May 6, Shirley Grace Snow of Orange-

ville was beaten, run down and killed by her husband in a parking lot.

Minister, unfortunately these tragedies are not isolated incidences. We know there is much more we can do to avoid future deaths. When can the people of Ontario expect your government to respond to the Hadley recommendations? When will you act on the jury's first recommendation to create a community-based committee to implement the—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Attorney General.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I said yesterday and I wish to say again today, if I may, that this government will not tolerate violence against women or children anywhere in this province. We must do everything we can as a society, and certainly as a government, to help women and children who find themselves in those situations to break free. It's not always easy. I'm sure the member opposite will accept that.

The recent incidents that have occurred, and frankly the incidents that have occurred over the last number of decades, have only served to strengthen our resolve to do more. But we've already started to act. When the member opposite talks about the May-Iles inquest and the excellent recommendations that came forward from that jury, I say that they were appreciated by this government. That's why we have implemented in excess of 90% of them, including the appointment of 56 new crowns, including the expansion of the domestic violence court projects across this province. Indeed, we very much welcome the work of the Hadley jury and have already started to implement those recommendations as well.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): To the same minister, on July 5, 2000, Steven Murray tried to kill his wife, Kathy, in front of her two children, hitting her with a baseball bat. He was to be detained another full year but has now been released after two months and will be living on his own in Sarnia. He only has to check into the hospital and abstain from alcohol. The hospital says that, yes, he's still a significant threat. Kathy is still receiving treatment for her injuries and is now living in fear because her estranged husband has been released early and permitted to live in the same community. Minister, why does the system continue to fail women like Kathy Murray?

Hon Mr Young: The member opposite knows that I can't comment on a particular case. Certainly, the facts she has presented to the Legislative Assembly are very compelling. To the victims in that situation, to the families, our hearts, our minds, our thoughts go out. I'm prevented by law from commenting on any given case. I can tell you, though, that as a government, the Mike Harris government and the Ernie Eves government, we have advocated and asked—

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): You made the laws.

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Hon Mr Young: With respect to the member, we did not make these laws. With respect, they are federal laws

and they relate to this count and they relate to automatic release from jail in many instances.

It may or may not relate to this particular case, but by and large when you talk about early release you are talking about a matter exclusively within the federal Liberal domain, and you folks on the other side, particularly the Liberal members in this House, are very much able to pick up the phone or to write a letter and to join us and say to the federal Liberal government that enough is enough. If someone gets a sentence of a year, they should stay in jail for a year, not be let out after six months or three months because of overcrowding.

This is an opportunity for the Liberals to actually act—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the Attorney General's time is up.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education. First of all, I want to thank you for your great announcement of over half a billion dollars, totalling \$557 million, of increases in funding to the provincial education budget since becoming the Minister of Education. Clearly, Minister, this shows your tremendous commitment to the priorities of this government, which we know is to ensure excellence in education. Can you please let the parents and educators in my riding of Scarborough Centre know what strategies you have initiated to ensure that our students reach their full potential?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): We have made significant announcements in education in recent weeks as the member has indicated. They total approximately \$557 million.

I think it's very important that we again confirm our commitment to the need for new textbooks. The first announcement that was made was \$65 million for new textbooks and also for technology-based learning materials. I think what was particularly significant about that announcement, and I've certainly received very positive feedback from those individuals working with special-needs students, was that that money was targeted particularly for their needs, and it enabled us to buy early math and reading materials.

There was also another \$25 million that was going to the early reading strategy, and we introduced the early math strategy.

Of course, all the boards together received more flexible funding, and we're now contributing \$14.2 billion to education in the province.

Ms Mushinski: It's obvious that the Ontario government, under the leadership of Premier Eves, is leading the way in developing and implementing new strategies that will assist in the academic development of all of Ontario's children. But I wonder, Minister, if you can tell this House how this new money that will be spent in education will directly help the many hard-working teachers in our schools, and how the Ministry of Education will

ensure that these new programs will remain accountable to the parents of my community and of this great province.

Hon Mrs Witmer: In the budget, there was \$10 million set aside to support our teachers and principals. This was for professional learning resources. We value, we appreciate and we respect the hard work that's undertaken by the teachers and principals. This money will go to technical guides; it will go to CD-ROM materials to help with the teaching of mathematics. There will be additional training for teachers, including new instruction techniques for effective teaching, and there's going to be a training program provided for teachers to help them with effectively analyzing the EQAO results and report cards.

When it comes to accountability for parents, parents have told us this is important. There will be additional resources, a parents' handbook to help them help their children learn and also target setting for math and reading.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, you restructured education governance in a way that it could not work, and we told you so. You have taken the power away from boards to meet local educational needs.

Last night, the Toronto Board of Education, supported by, give or take, 1,000 parents, decided to meet local needs in defiance of your cutbacks.

Minister, will you admit that your restructuring is a total failure?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We have restructured educational funding because we wanted to make sure that all children in this province had equal opportunity. We also wanted to make sure that the money that was going to education was actually being spent on the children in the classroom.

I see how hard trustees throughout this province are working to make sure that the money they are receiving is now going to the students in the classroom. We have given the Toronto board a significant amount of money in transition funding, some \$900 million to help them.

Mr Marchese: Toronto trustee Shelley Laskin says there is no split on the board when it comes to protecting programs and services to students. That includes Conservative, Liberal and NDP trustees.

In Ottawa-Carleton, a recent poll shows that 77% of people want the province to make up the budget shortfall for the 2002-03 school year. According to the same poll, more than half of Ottawa residents want to sue the government for failing to provide adequate resources.

I'm telling you, Minister, that trustees across the province are risking going to jail in order to provide programs their students need. When they do that, what will you do?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would remind the member opposite that he and I, and others in this House, have a responsibility to uphold the law. I hope he is not encouraging others to break the law, because it's a poor example that you would be setting for our students and for others.

PRIVATE CLINICS

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, we know that by now you're prepared to say just about anything, depending on whom you're talking to.

First of all, you denied there were any waiting lists at all in diagnostic testing in Ontario. Then we see a budget which, in the health section, puts an emphasis on diagnostic tests to take care of waiting lists that the week before you said didn't exist.

We said that simply opening private labs won't solve the problem because it will siphon off radiologists, of which we are short 150 in Ontario, from hospitals to work in these so-called private clinics. But yesterday morning, speaking to reporters, Minister, you said, "Do you know what? We actually have some radiologists who are underutilized right now in the system because there's no place for them to spend their hours."

Minister, you and I both know that's not true. There is a shortage of some 150 radiologists in Ontario. Will you reverse yourself today and acknowledge that we have a shortage in this province?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I am not refuting anything that I said yesterday or the day before. We've been quite consistent on this, that it is a goal of this government that we have been pursuing since the throne speech, that we want greater accessibility to diagnostic services. We heard from the people of Ontario after our consultation through the health care questionnaire of last year that accessibility was one of the four areas where the people of this province wished to see some immediate improvement.

This was a theme of our throne speech, this was a theme of the budget and this is something that the people of Ontario care very much about. Yes, we do believe that by tapping the resources of the private sector in a publicly funded, universally accessible service, we can in fact attract and retain more radiologists to be part of our health care system in the province of Ontario, so I don't see any contradiction in that at all.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, depending on what day it is, is dependent on what kind of an answer you give. First, there's no waiting list; then you want to introduce private labs because there's a waiting list. Yesterday there was no shortage, but today you think you might need radiologists.

Let me give you a list of some communities that are actively seeking radiologists. They include Toronto, Stratford, St Thomas, Pembroke, Peterborough, Ottawa, Sault Ste Marie, Timmins, Windsor and Chatham-Kent. These communities are looking desperately for this, but you, on the other hand, don't choose to introduce anything that actually solves the problem in diagnostic testing. This is the same government that removed \$200 million from the OHIP schedule for radiologists to actually bill for services, and today you're talking about how you underutilize radiologists in some centres.

Minister, your credibility is on the line: waiting lists, no waiting lists; not enough radiologists, now we have enough. I think it's time for you to be clear. We want solutions from this government to improve wait times for diagnostic testing. What will you introduce that will actually solve the problem?

1450

Hon Mr Clement: We have committed in the throne speech and the budget to increase the OHIP-funded portion of hospital diagnostics by 90%. We've also said that we are moving ahead with allowing, for the first time in Ontario, for MRI and CT scans the same kind of clinics that we have for X-rays, the same kind of clinics that we have for other diagnostics, the same kind of clinics that we have for laboratories—that were introduced, allowed into our system by one Elinor Caplan, Minister of Health in a Liberal government. Now we've got 1,000 of them in the system. I'm saying we should have a few more. Now you're opposed to it. At one time, when you were government, you introduced the legislation. Now you're opposed to it. Yesterday your leader said that he's in favour of private sector participation; now you're opposed to it. If there's anyone who has to come clean to the people of Ontario, it's you on the other side of the House.

VETERANS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I would like to take a minute first to recognize the mayor of Oshawa, who is in the visitors' gallery, Ms Nancy Diamond. Welcome to a great leader in the region of Durham.

My question is to the minister responsible for citizenship and seniors. I was reviewing the history of Canada Day and noticed that July 1, 2002, marks the 20th anniversary since Dominion Day became Canada Day. I also noticed that the first recognized Dominion Day event included an important dedication to the valour of Canadians fighting in the First World War in Europe. What work is the Ontario government doing to ensure that veterans continue to be honoured for their important contribution to Canadian and Ontario history?

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I thank my colleague for the question. No single group has sacrificed more than our veterans. It is through their sacrifices that we all enjoy our freedom today. It is with sadness that I say we all notice on Remembrance Day the dwindling numbers of these brave souls to whom we owe so much.

Veterans are our living memory. That is why our government has invested \$1 million toward the Memory Project. The goal of this project is to ensure that veterans' contributions are recognized and remembered. Veterans will go into classrooms around the province to share their first-hand accounts of our history. We believe that it is vitally important to pass on an understanding of our heritage to the next generation.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that very courteous response.

Durham organizations such as the Royal Canadian Legion, serving Clarington and Oshawa and Port Perry, make every effort to ensure that we won't forget the sacrifices that many Ontarians made many years ago. I thank them publicly today for the sacrifice they have made. May we never forget them.

Veterans in my riding are proud to share first-hand experiences with their young people, and it draws to mind Fred Brown, Norm Baker, Jack Meachin, Rae Abernethy and Harvey Jones. They regularly visit schools in my riding. I've been there with them and I'll stand beside them. Fred West, who is now deceased, was over 100 years old and served in the First World War. In Scugog some of the veterans who visit schools include Doug Franks, Bob Healey, Geoff Taylor, Jim Smitherman and the late Vic Sparrow. However, they are concerned that the younger generations be aware of our history and heritage, as important as it is.

Minister, the Memory Project is a worthy endeavour and I commend you for your soldiering on to bring this project—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the member's time is up.

Hon Mr DeFaria: I want to congratulate the member for recognizing some veterans from his riding. I want to tell the member that I and many of our colleagues share those concerns. For many young people today, their only real-life connection is Remembrance Day. It is important that our young people are able to hear through first-hand accounts the history of Dieppe and the battle of Hill 355, to name just a couple.

At present, almost 400 veterans have been recruited to participate in the Memory Project. By the end of next year, another 1,000 veterans will have provided a living history lesson to more than 50,000 students across Ontario. The Memory Project is designed to fit with the revised Ontario curriculum for grade 10 Canadian history. We encourage all schools and veterans to get involved directly, or on-line at www.thememory-project.com.

I want to thank veterans for their incredible contribution to and participation in the Memory Project. They will ensure our youth will never forget.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. In Monday's budget you all but ignored the community colleges of this province. Of the money you gave for the double cohort, less than 7% went to community colleges. The rest went to the universities. While we acknowledge the need at the university level, the colleges are feeling like second-class citizens this week. They've come out with a choice: instead of taking 33,000 students in 2003 as expected, they will either take 10,000 fewer students or cut programs.

Minister, will you, first, admit that you've made a mistake and, second, commit to more funding for colleges across this province?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): The most important message in the budget was that there will be a place for every qualified and motivated student in both our universities and our colleges. I was hoping I could find the numbers here—the amount of money that went into the college system was not just the \$5 million. There was also \$10 million for an apprenticeship fund; \$10 million to support the colleges that are having a more difficult time in the northern part of our province and of course in rural Ontario; and there was another \$5 million, which was part of the apprenticeship training fund, that actually grows to \$25 million in just three years.

It is an effort to bring the colleges up to where they think they should be. I will say this is a very good budget for the colleges. We have worked together. I'm not a bit surprised to hear questions from the opposition, but don't mislead students. There will be a place for every qualified and motivated—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Minister, I'm afraid you can't say "mislead."

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I apologize, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I know you did it inadvertently.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Be that as it may, it wasn't I who misled anyone. The head of the association of colleges has said 10,000 fewer students will be admitted in 2003, or programs will be cut at a time of a skilled worker shortage.

I ask you again, Minister: why are you treating community colleges as second-class citizens? They educate 40% of our post-secondary students. We have a skilled worker crisis now. You can't wait three years. We need to start training skilled workers now. Will you commit to giving additional monies to community colleges to address the double cohort and to begin to solve the amazing crisis we are having in the skilled worker shortage?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: The operating grants to colleges will total \$788.4 million in 2002-03, an increase of \$42.5 million, the best we've been able to do, over 2001-02 levels. That is a 5.7% increase, and compares to a projected 3.2% increase with the new students added on for enrolment in 2002-03.

The challenge we have as a government and as elected representatives is to make sure this next generation of young people is as enthusiastic about going to our colleges and universities and into our apprenticeship training systems as they can ever be. If the leaders in this province, people who actually know what's happening and know we have 25 new buildings for colleges, 25 for universities, nine for universities and colleges to share, and now we have the operating dollars and research and student assistance—

The Speaker: And the member for Perth-Middlesex.

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LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Labour, the hard-working Brad Clark from Stoney Creek. Minister, an attempt by a company named Navistar, which operates a heavy truck assembly plant in Chatham, a part of the province not unlike Perth-Middlesex, to use replacement workers during a strike has led to an incident of picket line violence. Why do employers use replacement workers during strikes?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I thank the honourable member for the question. First, I'd like to state that our government recognizes that harmonious labour relations are key to a successful economy. To have harmonious labour relations means there has to be a balance in labour relations. In a strike or lockout situation, for example, there must be a balance to encourage both parties to negotiate and end a labour dispute.

To create that balance, the Labour Relations Act provides that a union has the right to remove the services of its members but, conversely, an employer has the right to carry on his or her business. It's the responsibility of parties affected by a work stoppage to respect each others' rights and obey the law.

It's important to note that 95% of all collective agreements in Ontario were settled without strike or lockout during the year 2001.

Mr Johnson: Minister, I respect the need for balance in labour disputes. In many such disputes, both sides have exhausted civil remedies and are therefore somewhat desperate. Are you personally involved in helping to diffuse this situation, and, if so, how?

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): What are you doing about it?

Hon Mr Clark: To the member for Hamilton East also, yes, I am personally involved. While it is the responsibility of the parties to resolve their differences at the bargaining table, ministry mediators are available to assist at the parties' request. The mediators are always available to assist the parties in resolving labour disputes.

I have personally spoken this morning with Buzz Hargrove, the leader of the CAW, about resolving the situation. I've also placed a call to Navistar's head office and I'm scheduled to speak with a Navistar official this evening from Chicago. We are encouraging both the company and the union to get back to the bargaining table and bargain under a media blackout to resolve this situation quickly.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Deputy Premier, it seems the Chatham-Kent police force understands something your Minister of Labour doesn't. For two days now, the Chatham-Kent police force has been turning back busloads of scabs from the Navistar International plant. The police in Chatham-Kent know that scabs prolong labour disputes, that scabs steal union workers' jobs, and thirdly, that scabs create confrontation

and a volatility that's dangerous to all involved. Why aren't you going to understand the scenario as the Chatham-Kent police do and restore anti-scab legislation in this province?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Labour.

Hon Mr Clark: To the honourable member for Niagara Centre, I can understand how he wouldn't understand a balanced approach to labour. They never understood a balanced approach to labour in that party.

It's important to recognize the fact that we on this side of the House recognize that in labour relations, in order to make it harmonious, both sides have to have a balanced approach. On this particular point, the union has the right to withdraw the services, and under the Labour Relations Act the company also has the right to continue working and operating. The member doesn't understand this. He's never recognized as yet in this House that the reality is that 95% of the collective agreements in the province of Ontario have been settled without strike or lockout, and this is since these amendments to the Labour Relations Act were put in place. So his hue and cry about labour relations falling apart in Ontario doesn't hold water. We're doing our job. We are involved.

Mr Kormos: You see, it's the minister and his Conservative government that rolled out the red carpet for scabs in this province, that sanctioned scabs and, quite frankly, by virtue of doing that, sanction the confrontations that result from companies like Navistar International busing scabs into workplaces, or trying to, were it not for the intervention of Chatham-Kent police, who have been turning back busloads of scabs. Scabs prolong labour disputes; scabs make labour disputes more hostile, more volatile. The Chatham-Kent Police understand this.

Minister, why won't you take a role of leadership in ensuring that labour disputes are resolved more quickly, that they're resolved with less acrimony? Why won't you restore anti-scab legislation here in the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr Clark: I'm stunned by the member's question. He's accusing me of not taking leadership here. I spoke with Buzz Hargrove this morning. I called him personally to talk about the situation. I also spoke to Navistar this morning, and I have another telephone call tonight with them.

We're encouraging both parties to get back to the table to do collective bargaining. What is it? You have something against collective bargaining? You don't want me encouraging these two parties to sit down and communicate? Give me a break. You can't have it both ways. You're either on the side of collective bargaining or you're not. We're encouraging both parties to sit down and talk. I don't know what your problem is, but we want these people back to work.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Pursuant to

standing order 55, I have news of next week for the House.

On Monday afternoon we will debate government notice of motion number 30. On Monday evening we will continue debate on Bill 109, the budget bill.

On Tuesday afternoon we will debate Bill 109. Tuesday evening's business is yet to be determined.

On Wednesday afternoon we will debate Bill 109. On Wednesday evening we will call Bill 80, Bill 86 and Bill 81.

On Thursday morning, during private members' public business, we will discuss ballot item 53 standing in the name of Mr Duncan, and ballot item 54 standing in the name of Mr Bradley. On Thursday afternoon we will debate a motion for interim supply, and on Thursday evening we will call Bills 58, 109 and 80. We will also deal with private bills, and it is likely we will deal with other business that, my friends, as House leader to the other party, we have yet to settle.

PETITIONS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition concerns the double cohort and quality, and it's from the College Student Alliance: Partners in Learning. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Cambrian College students' administrative council.

"Whereas by eliminating the fifth year of high school the government of Ontario has created a double cohort of students; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has promised that there will be a space at a university or college for every willing and qualified student; and

"Whereas Ontario's universities and colleges have not received sufficient funding from the government of Ontario to accommodate these double cohort students; and

"Whereas the quality of education at Ontario's universities and colleges has been declining in recent years; and

"Whereas the double cohort students will add an additional strain on an already fragile university and college system;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: provide full funding for every new student entering Ontario's universities and colleges; provide additional funding to increase quality at Ontario's universities and colleges; provide targeted funding to colleges for skills and innovation; and increase the per student funding to the national average over the next five years."

Of course I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Holly to bring to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the provincial Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the education funding formula will force the Toronto District School Board to cut \$123.5 million in programs and services which students and their families need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the provincial Legislature of Ontario to join the Toronto District School Board in requesting that the government of Ontario begin an immediate review of the funding formula; maintain current funding levels of 2001-02 until the review is completed; put our children first by providing the level of funding for the public school system that our children need and deserve.

"We call upon the government of Ontario to work in co-operation with school boards across Ontario so that everyone charged with delivering education can ensure that students will succeed in school."

It's signed by more than 300 people and I affix my signature hereto.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I have a petition to present on behalf of several of my constituents which reads in part:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To halt the Ontario government's proposed 20-year forest management plan to be implemented on crown land in Renfrew county by the Ministry of Natural Resources; and

"To request the Ministry of the Environment" for Ontario "to reconsider the decision to manage our forests in this manner and to allow natural growth to provide an unspoiled inheritance for future generations."

1510

SCHOOL SAFETY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My petition, signed by hundreds of people in my riding, reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

"Whereas guaranteeing the safety and security of our children is universally recognized as absolutely essential by all people in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the ability of Ontario's schools to provide adequate levels of safety and security for Ontario's children has been called into question by recent incidents in which children have been attacked by individuals who have gained illegal entry to schools; and

"Whereas parents and school officials want to make physical changes to make our schools safer; and

"Whereas parents and school officials are concerned about the loss of educational assistants, custodians,

lunchroom supervisors, librarians, physical education teachers, computer lab instructors, music instructors, vice-principals and other supports staff, who are the eyes and ears of our schools; and

"Whereas the lack of money for staffing and capital repairs is a direct result of the disastrous education funding formula adopted by the Conservative government;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) That the government of Ontario immediately institute a school safety fund that will provide schools with adequate funding to make necessary renovations that are required for school safety.

"(2) That the new education minister immediately amend the Conservative education funding formula to allow for adequate education funding that will provide funds for adequate staffing, building repairs and quality education."

I totally agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Centre Hastings are facing an immediate and critical situation in accessing physician services; and

"Whereas a retiring family physician has been unsuccessful in procuring a replacement physician, potentially leaving 5,000 patients without a doctor; and

"Whereas accessibility to already overcrowded hospital emergency departments and walk-in clinics is limited because of distance and availability to transportation; and

"Whereas Centre Hastings has been designated as an underserviced area in need of five physicians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act immediately to establish a community health centre in Centre Hastings."

I will very happily affix my signature to this petition, because I am in full agreement with it.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a petition which reads:

"Parents in support of the TDSB Need to Succeed budget.

"In 1998 the provincial government took over control of funding for public education. Since that time there have been many calls for the government to review the funding formula used to determine the amount of money received by each school board.

"The Toronto District School Board has chosen to create a budget based on the needs of students, not on the

funding formula. This budget has been called the Need to Succeed budget.

"As parents, teachers and community members involved in education in Toronto we support the process of funding education based on need rather than on formula.

"We call on: the provincial government to accept the Toronto District School Board's Need to Succeed budget when it is presented, and to amend the funding formula as necessary to provide adequate needs-based funding to all boards in Ontario; the Toronto District School Board to accept and pass the Need to Succeed budget and send it to the provincial government."

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it's entitled:

"Listen: Our Hearing is Important!"

"Whereas services delisted by the Eves-Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas this new Harris-Eves government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserviced areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Harris-Eves government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

I, of course, agree with this petition. I affix my signature and give it to Samantha to bring to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many high school students in Ontario outraged at the harshness of the new curriculum choose to leave school on May 15, 2002;

"Inadequate funding made difficult the implementation of the new curriculum;

"High school students should not be used as forced labour in addition to the extra hours required for the new curriculum;

"There is inadequate funding for the double cohort year. Universities and colleges will have trouble providing room for all those students;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We demand that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students establish a funding model to correct the shortcomings in the system;

"Further be it resolved that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students make recommendations to help those students who have had to change their career paths due to the harshness of the new system;

"Further be it resolved that students are no longer to do compulsory volunteer work;

"Further be it resolved that adequate funding be given for the double cohort year."

Hundreds of students have signed that. I have affixed my signature as well. Page Andrew from Kenora-Rainy River will be delivering this to the Clerk's table.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition concerns the double cohort and quality in education. It was garnered by the College Student Alliance, Partners in Learning.

It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's from the Canadore Students Representative Council.

"Whereas by eliminating the fifth year of high school, the government of Ontario has created a double cohort of students; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has promised that there will be a space at a university or college for every willing and qualified student; and

"Whereas Ontario's universities and colleges have not received sufficient funding from the government of Ontario to accommodate these double cohort students; and

"Whereas the quality of education at Ontario's universities and colleges has been declining in recent years; and

"Whereas the double cohort students will add an additional strain on an already fragile university and college system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: provide full funding for every new student entering Ontario's universities and colleges; provide additional funding to increase quality at Ontario's universities and colleges; provide targeted funding to colleges for skills and innovation; and increase the per student funding to the national average over the next five years."

I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Jordan and ask him to bring it to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): The petitions on school funding are coming in thick and fast. I have yet another one here. It's a lengthy one, so I'm going to summarize it.

It's a petition from citizens of Ontario, calling on the provincial government to revise the funding formula for

public education. It says that the provincial government's funding formula for public schools is inadequate to meet the needs of Ontario's schools and that the formula does not work for small schools, urban schools and rural schools.

It goes on to focus on full funding for kindergarten education assistants. Education assistants are integral to the kindergarten program because it is widely recognized that education and nurturing between the ages of zero and six is key to children's overall success in school and life, and education assistants in JK and SK classes provide support to children that allows the kindergarten teachers to use their teaching expertise to the full.

The importance of small student-to-adult ratios is embedded in the provincial Day Nurseries Act through the legislated 8.1 ratio for children of kindergarten age.

There are obvious safety concerns if kindergarten teachers do not have help in their classroom, in the gym and in the playground. Yet the provincial funding formula only covers \$1 million of more than \$22 million the Toronto District School Board currently spends on education assistants.

"Therefore, as part of needs-based funding and in accordance with the provincial government's stated commitment to quality education for children in their early years, we demand that the provincial government provide full funding for at least one education assistant in every kindergarten classroom."

I will affix my signature because I agree with this petition.

1520

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ernie Eves 2002 budget proves he'll say anything to hold on to power and is trying to run away from his own record;

"Whereas Ernie Eves's budget fails to deliver what Ontario families need, like a moratorium on school closures and a real cap on class sizes in the early years;

"Whereas the private school tax voucher should be cancelled, not delayed, and that money put into public classrooms;

"Whereas the \$2.2 billion corporate tax giveaway should be cancelled, not delayed;

"Whereas Ontario families are looking for real, positive change and only Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party represent that change;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to tell Ernie Eves to put Ontario working families first, cancel the corporate tax cut and cancel the private school tax voucher."

Of course, I affix my signature to this petition as I'm in agreement. I give it to Stephanie and ask her to bring it to the table.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario will be considering a private member's bill that aims to amend the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases; and

"Whereas optometrists are highly trained and equipped with the knowledge and specialized instrumentation needed to effectively diagnose and treat certain eye problems; and

"Whereas extending the authority to prescribe TPAs to optometrists will help relieve the demands on ophthalmologists and physicians who currently have the exclusive domain for prescribing TPAs to optometry patients; and

"Whereas the bill introduced by New Democrat Peter Kormos (MPP—Niagara Centre) will ensure that patients receive prompt, timely, one-stop care where appropriate;

"Therefore I do support the bill proposing an amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases and I urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage of the bill."

I've affixed my signature as well.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Listen: Our Hearing is Important!

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris-Eves government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas the new Harris and Eves government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas this new Harris-Eves government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserviced areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Harris-Eves government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Andrei to bring to the table.

The Acting Speaker: The time for petitions has ended.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to standing order 37(a) the member for Trinity-Spadina has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Education concerning the loss of music teachers. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the Minister of Energy, the Minister of the Environment, the government House leader.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Thank you for reminding everyone. Government notice of motion 29.

I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 81, An Act to provide standards with respect to the management of materials containing nutrients used on lands, to provide for the making of regulations with respect to farm animals and lands to which nutrients are applied, and to make related amendments to other Acts, when Bill 81 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding “deferred votes”; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

I've agreed to split my time today with the Minister of Agriculture and the member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant. I'm going to kick off the debate here, because I think this is the kind of bill that needs ministers speaking to it who are affected by it. Obviously, the Ministry of the Environment is affected by it. Maybe more so, the Minister and the Ministry of Agriculture have a lot to do with this bill as well. I'm not going to take a lot of time. We've got 45 or 46 minutes per caucus. I know there are a lot of things the Minister of Agriculture and the member want to get on the record.

I just want to say I think this is the kind of bill that should be supported by all sides of the House. I can't believe there is anyone in this House who will fundamentally disagree with the process we are putting in place with this bill. It's protection, it's water protection and it's nutrient management. The agricultural community, having built a good relationship with this government and given an undertaking to help us draft regs and move forward on the regulations, has worked hard to

make the bill work. I think the affected parties and groups have done a good job of analyzing the bill and giving their input to the government. In a timely way, this government listened and came up with what I think is a very good piece of legislation that will satisfy the needs and concerns of constituents as well as deal with those people who work in the agriculture community.

I want to tip my hat to the Minister of Agriculture and as well to the previous Minister of Agriculture, Mr Coburn, who did a lot of work on that.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): And Mr Hardeman, the one before him.

Hon Mr Stockwell: And to Mr Hardeman. I tip my hat to him as well.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): As long as you don't eat your hat.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's right. We don't want to talk about hats too much this week. But I will tip my hat to him as well.

I just want to go on the record as the Minister of the Environment to tell the people of this province that this piece of legislation will be another building block in the protection of their drinking water, their environment and the good way of life we've developed in Ontario. I think it's important that this piece of legislation stop being dragged out.

I know they're going to talk about a time allocation motion today, and it's somewhat frustrating for me to deal with a time allocation motion on a bill such as this. I don't think there's a fundamental difference of opinion on this bill. It's a shame it's been tied up for the length of time it has. Maybe you could have talked about amendments—they'd be accepted or not accepted—but I think everyone believes on balance that the bill, if passed, is going to make for a better place to live than if we didn't pass this bill.

But we have to do a time allocation motion. This seems to be the nature of the beast we have in this place. Every bill, regardless of how innocuous or supported by all three parties, somehow needs to be debated for three days and a time allocation motion passed by the government in order to get it through the House, which is difficult and frustrating.

Some of us would like to debate other bills for a greater length of time. I think of Bill 58: we would have had great opportunity to have two or three weeks' debate on Bill 58 if we didn't have to debate bills we agree with. I don't think the spirit of this House is meant to work that way, but that seems to be the way we're moving. I am frustrated, but hopefully, with the good leadership of all three parties and the bright, thoughtful House leaders for the two opposition parties, maybe we can get together to figure out a process whereby we can actually bring some more meaningful debate to this place on bills we have a difference of opinion on and move bills we agree with through faster so that time is available for us to use.

I thank you for your time. I look forward to members on this side of the House speaking to the bill and, of course, hearing from members opposite. Everyone's

voice needs to be heard, and I'll be interested in hearing their concerns.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Peters: The only comment I will make on time allocation is, "Here we go again." Introducing time allocation bills seems to be a precedent this government likes to put forward. I do want to take this opportunity to speak to Bill 81 and some of the issues that have come out of it but, more importantly, the items that have not been included in this legislation.

I don't think there is anyone in this House who doesn't agree on the need for a comprehensive, province-wide piece of legislation and accompanying regulations that would enforce nutrient management in this province. But the problem with the piece of legislation we have in front of us is that it's an empty shell. It's an enabling piece of legislation and, as we know, the devil is in the details of the regulations.

What I'd like to do over the next few minutes is just point out some of the areas where I believe this bill doesn't go far enough and I feel that it's going to have some serious ramifications for the agricultural community.

1530

I just want to put on the record from the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture that they wrote to Minister Johns on May 28 expressing a number of concerns. They understood the need for comprehensive, province-wide legislation and regulations, but they also had a number of issues that they felt needed to be addressed. So there is even concern within the agricultural community out there.

The Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture writes, "This legislation and regulations have the potential to destroy the agriculture industry and that is why our list of recipients is so extensive." They are concerned too that the long-term view will show that Bill 81 has the potential to destroy livestock agriculture in its present form and that the requirements of Bill 81, due to the cost of compliance, will force some farmers out of business.

So there is concern out there in the agricultural community, but I think there is concern as well from municipalities and from rural residents. One only needs to pick up the paper and look at the issues, be it in the Dunnville area or in the minister's own backyard in Huron county or in the former minister's own backyard outside of Ottawa. There are a lot of concerns out there. This legislation does need to be put in place, but it needs to have some teeth to it, and there are a lot of areas where those teeth do not exist.

It has been a long process. It's interesting: here we are on June 20. This legislation was introduced in this House one year and seven days ago. It's been a long time in coming. There have been a lot of delays. This bill has probably had more committee time than many other bills. I think it was a good thing that the parliamentary assistant to the minister led a province-wide discussion on the bill. We visited nine municipalities, and it was a very good opportunity to get input from municipalities,

from residents and, most importantly, from the agricultural community. So there has been extensive consultation on this bill and we do need to get on with it, but unfortunately, what we're getting on with isn't necessarily the right thing.

I want to point out a few areas of concern and some amendments that we put forward, and I will come to those.

This is not being used as a prop, Mr Speaker. This is part two of the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, and I want to talk about some of the issues that Justice O'Connor raised in his report.

"Agriculture represents one of the most intimate relationships that exists between humans and the rest of the natural world, and it is impossible to expect that it can be carried out without creating changes in the environment. But agriculture is also a source of contaminants that sometimes appear in drinking water, and those must be controlled."

We do need to control them, and that's certainly what the intent of this legislation is, but there are a lot of other threats to the water in this province. I think we need to recognize that we all have to accept a collective responsibility for the contamination of water sources in this province, be it in faulty septic systems, as Justice O'Connor pointed out. An alarming statistic that was often quoted to him is that approximately one third of the septic systems in this province are in compliance with the building code, a third are simply out of compliance, and a third could be characterized as a public health nuisance. Septic systems have nothing to do with agriculture. They are out there in the rural communities, and it's another issue that needs to be addressed.

Part of the problem in this bill is that they are going to ban the spreading of septage on the lands. It's going to take five years. But what this government hasn't thought through is, how do we deal with that septage? Are you going to help support municipalities so they can accept the local honeybee truck to deal with the septage at a pollution control plant? The government hasn't addressed that issue.

We can talk about some other things out of Justice O'Connor's report.

"Farmers' Commitment to the Environment"

"Ontario's farmers have generally demonstrated a strong commitment to the environment. Many have been certified under the environmental farm plan." But he goes on to say, "The Ontario Federation of Agriculture and other farmers' organizations suggested that the EFP may be threatened by funding cuts at the provincial level. I think such cuts would be most unfortunate." That environmental farm plan is incumbent; it's one of the main tools we need to ensure is in place with this legislation.

I'd like to go into some of the amendments that we put forward. It's really interesting that after Justice O'Connor released this report, there was a quick commitment made by the Premier of this province that all the recommendations in this report would be implemented. So I'm going

to read some of the recommendations from Justice O'Connor's report and then I'm going to make reference to them in the amendments that we put forward and I'll tell you how the government voted on these recommendations.

Let's talk about recommendation 11: "The Ministry of the Environment should take the lead role in regulating the potential impacts of farm activities on drinking water sources. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs should provide technical support to the Ministry of the Environment and should continue to advise farmers about the protection of drinking water sources."

Again, the government said they are committed to everything in this book. We put forth an amendment to the legislation. We moved that "Minister" means the Minister of Environment and Energy," the lead ministry, "unless the context requires otherwise." That's straight out of recommendation 11, and the government turned it down.

Let's look at some other recommendations that were in Justice O'Connor's report.

I think this is one of the keys, and this is one of the key reasons why we can't support this legislation. Recommendation 16 talked about economic initiatives: "The provincial government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, should establish a system of cost-share incentives for water protection projects on farms," ie, helping farmers with money to make these capital improvements.

I'm going to read you the amendment we put forward. We put forward an amendment that talked about economic incentives: "In enforcing this act, the minister shall at all times consider the desirability of using economic incentives to encourage compliance." The government voted that recommendation down.

That's two recommendations in Justice O'Connor's report that the government voted down. What kind of commitment is that to implementing what is in this report? We felt these amendments needed to be not talked about in regulations; they needed to be in the bill, upfront, so that farmers, residents and municipalities could see very clearly the commitment and the support. But those amendments were voted down, and I find that extremely disconcerting.

I think what's disconcerting as well is that when you look at the budget that was just introduced this past week, there was no talk in that budget of providing financial support for compliance, for any upgrades that are going to have to be made to farms in this province as a result of Bill 81.

I want to talk about another area. We'll talk about a few other things in here from Justice O'Connor, but let's talk a little bit about the bill itself.

This is an important aspect of this legislation and one that I agree has to be in place in this legislation, because if we don't have this in place—and one of my colleagues has introduced a private member's bill, and it's private

members' business, but it flies in the face of what the intent is of this legislation.

1540

Unlike what we have right now, a hodgepodge of municipal bylaws across this province regulating nutrients, the intent of this legislation is to develop province-wide standards and regulations. That's section 60 of the bill, and we supported that because it's important that we not allow a municipality to set a standard that is lower or higher than what's intended in the legislation. It is incumbent on us that we support section 60 to ensure that we have those province-wide standards. That comes right out of recommendation number 14. It goes on to say in recommendation 14 that "municipalities should not have the authority to require that farm to meet a higher standard of protection of drinking water sources than that which is laid out in the farm's water protection plan." So it's incumbent on us that we maintain a level playing field across this province.

We talked about some other things. Another reason why we can't support this bill, and I made reference to it already, is the question of the regulations, because the devil is in the detail. We have not had the ability to see those regulations, and I know that there's some question about the appropriateness of when you can bring regulations forward. I can tell you, I would have worked to get a draft set of regulations out there so that we could have had some consultation with the agricultural community, the residents and the municipalities. But that didn't happen.

As Justice O'Connor points out very clearly on page 137, "These points suggest that the Nutrient Management Act as it is proposed may not be sufficient in itself to protect the sources of Ontario's drinking water from potential agricultural contaminants. The act's effectiveness will depend on the development of appropriate regulations." So how can we vote for a bill that even Justice O'Connor says is insufficient? We need to have the regulations in place, and we do not have those regulations in place.

Something else that we need to be concerned about with this piece of legislation that's in front of us, and it's one that really bothers me, is this whole question of, as the government likes to term them, alternative service delivery agents; ie, privatization. I have some real concern. We've seen the track record of this government in its desire to privatize everything it possibly can and we've seen the fallout of some of the privatization. The worst example of that fallout is contained in Justice O'Connor's two reports. This is another reason we can't support this bill, because we attempted to have clearly defined who could enforce this legislation. We put forth an amendment that the minister designate in writing as provincial officers persons or classes of persons—Ministry of Energy and Environment employees, Ministry of Agriculture and Food employees with specialized expertise making it desirable for them to have the powers of provincial officers, and employees of conservation authorities. The government turned it down. The

government wants to allow for privatization in the areas of inspection and enforcement, and I think that's a really serious oversight on the part of this government. Again, they voted it down. This was straight out of O'Connor as well. It talked about the protection of all sources of water. Unfortunately, this amendment was ruled out of order.

I think another area that we really believed needed to be looked at was the whole area of the spreading of nutrients on golf courses. We know the majority of golf courses in this province are located in rural areas. Golf courses are located generally very near watercourses, but golf courses as well are major users of nutrients to help keep those greens green. We attempted to have an amendment put in that would regulate golf courses as well.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):
Did they accept it?

Mr Peters: It was turned down by this government. We know why: they've got so many friends out on the golf course that they didn't want to speak against them.

The Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture passed a resolution: "Be it resolved that the Simcoe federation of agriculture take a stand of non-support for the proposed Nutrient Management Act and so inform the Ontario Federation of Agriculture until all farmers are assured"—and I think the Simcoe federation of agriculture lays it out so clearly—"all sources of nutrients in our environment are viewed identically; livestock farms are not the subject of increased scrutiny that differs from that given to other animals or to other sources of nutrients; sizes of livestock enterprises be limited only by the area of land available to receive manure by these livestock; land-lease arrangements for manure application are equal to land ownership; any and all enforcement personnel will have significant agricultural training and expertise; programs are in place to train and certify those who would offer services of nutrient management plan development; farmers should have the right to prepare their nutrient management plan; and that OMAFRA provide the training and opportunities for such farmers."

There's a lot of concern out there. I don't believe the government has fully heard all that concern. They haven't used the opportunity to include some of these issues of concern in this legislation.

Justice O'Connor goes to great lengths talking about recommendations, issues of agriculture and their potential impact on the environment and puts forth a number of good recommendations that, quite frankly, should have been included in this bill. But the government didn't listen.

I want to go back to the point of the lead ministry. Again, I stress, in recommendation 11—the government turned down Justice O'Connor's recommendation that it be the Ministry of the Environment. I quote from Justice O'Connor: "It is essential that a single ministry in the provincial government be responsible for developing and enforcing regulations." "I prefer the Ministry of the Environment," says Justice O'Connor.

He goes on to explain why. I think people understand why. I don't understand where the government is coming from.

"I am wary of the perception of a conflict of interest within OMAFRA, which could be seen to be simultaneously promoting the needs of the agriculture community and regulating that community. The possibility of such a perception has increased in the past few years, during which time OMAFRA has focused strongly on rural economic development and provided less attention to environmental protection. This development is reflected in the removal in 1998 of the statements concerning environmental protection from the ministry's statement of environmental values under the Environmental Bill of Rights." That was noted by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

There are a lot of things that are lacking in this bill, and that's why we can't support it when it comes up for third reading. I'm going to summarize. First, the lack of a clearly designated lead ministry: Justice O'Connor says the Ministry of the Environment; we don't know what the government says. Second, the lack of regulations: not having those regulations in front of us, and knowing that's where the details are, makes it impossible to support the bill. Third, the lack of financial commitment to ensure any capital improvements that have to be made aren't going to be on the backs of the farmers: we haven't seen that commitment to capital improvements. Fourth, alternative service delivery models, ie privatization. We've seen where privatization got us, and I don't like where it took us. I would hope the government would recognize that they need to re-evaluate this and ensure that in this legislation it's clearly defined and that there are public servants doing the job. But we don't have that in this bill.

After two and a half years we're finally at this point, but we still have the regulations to be discussed. I hope the government moves quickly on getting those regulations out and undertakes a thorough consultation of those regulations, as thorough a consultation as took place surrounding the introduction of Bill 81.

1550

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I believe we're here debating yet again another motion to close debate. I understand that the government is anxious to get on and get this Nutrient Management Act passed. May I say from the outset that I take responsibility for holding the bill up on December 13, when the government was trying to get unanimous consents to get many, many bills passed without proper debate. I held it up. The NDP caucus agreed with me because we knew that Judge O'Connor would be releasing his part two report from the Walkerton inquiry some time in the intersession, and we wanted to make sure that before we passed this bill we would have an opportunity to look at Justice O'Connor's recommendations to see if we could then persuade the government to make amendments, to reflect amendments

that I made on behalf of our caucus previously, which were turned down.

We were hopeful that after the report came to the public's attention the government would be more agreeable to sending it back to committee and taking the time to get it right. Indeed, since Premier Eves promised to implement every single recommendation within the Walkerton report, that would have suggested that our amendments—I'm surprised in fact that the government didn't bring forward amendments of their own to reflect those recommendations.

What happened? We negotiated, if you can call it that, with the House leader, Mr Stockwell. After we came back, after the leadership convention, we wanted to have the opportunity to have more hearings and to put forward our amendments once again and some new ones based on the recommendations from Justice O'Connor.

What did we get? Negotiation led us to get half a day of public hearings, the day after the decision was made to have more public hearings. So we had to scramble. I was on the phone half the afternoon and night calling people across the province who I knew had an interest to get in here the following afternoon. I have to congratulate and thank all of those who actually did manage—that's how important it was to them—to get here to be able to submit their recommendations and concerns and, in some cases, support for the bill. They were here to do that, and we got written submissions as well.

I am happy that the NDP did make sure that this bill had the opportunity to go through that process once again, and I don't think anybody would disagree that, given the circumstance that we were waiting for this report, we should have indeed had further hearings and should have had further amendments to reflect those recommendations.

The NDP believes that we need a strong Nutrient Management Act in this province and we need to have it in place as soon as possible to ensure that we never have a tragedy like Walkerton again in this province. For a number of other reasons too, we've always supported the concept and the idea. After the release of the second Walkerton report, we felt strongly that some important amendments were required.

However, the government refused to accept any of the amendments from the Liberal caucus or any of my amendments. Many of our amendments were similar. I had some that the Liberals didn't support, but on the whole they supported most of my amendments and I supported theirs.

The government, as usual, came to that committee when we were doing clause-by-clause a few days later and had written material that had clearly been provided to them by the ministry, by ministry officials perhaps within the minister's office, explaining why they couldn't support each and every amendment that was made.

What happens now is that we have a bill that leaves many important details to regulations. We've said all along that we don't know what's going to be in those regulations. Many of the things we're concerned about

we're told may show up in regulations—we don't know—but I would have preferred they show up in the legislation itself. We may not know if they'll see the light of day ever.

We argued very strongly in both of the committee hearings that took place, as short as the second one was, that the bill as it stands now doesn't provide additional resources for enforcement. I travelled with the committee and listened to people in the first round talk about the need—you would know this, Mr Speaker; you come from a rural area of Ontario—and even those who were in support of the bill said that they could not do it, they couldn't commit to being able to meet the requirements of the bill without additional regulations.

We fought very hard to get such an amendment made, or a promise from the government that those resources would be available to the actual farmers themselves, but not only that, additional resources for enforcement. Right now we know that the ministries are already cut to the bone, don't have enough money, don't have enough resources to fulfill their obligations under many acts, as it stands now, and a lot of our environmental regulations and laws are not being followed.

The bill also doesn't use a common sense approach, and that is the precautionary principle to prevent future disasters. It doesn't include golf courses, which are another huge potential source of pollution. It doesn't provide for publication of nutrient plans under the EBR, which some people asked for. It doesn't hold the government liable for keeping our water clean and safe. It flies in the face of a recent Supreme Court decision, and it actually replaces the even tougher rules that local citizens may pass in their own municipalities.

This bill could be critically important if it actually accomplishes the things we need accomplished here. Keeping unwanted nutrients from getting into our drinking water and protecting our food, water and soil from pollutants are all very important goals.

However, if the purpose of this bill is to prevent another tragedy like Walkerton, then it fails utterly. If the purpose of this bill is to shift the blame and deny accountability, then it succeeds. If the purpose of the bill is to keep our water clean and safe, then the bill falls far too short of that. If the purpose of the bill is to yet again privatize the protection of an enormously important public good, then it will do so nicely, because that's what it's doing.

This bill is far from what it should be and far from what is needed. I want to make it clear right now for those who would argue and say that this bill would prevent another Walkerton or would go a long way in terms of preventing another Walkerton that report number two, should you take the time to read it, makes starkly clear that the bill as it is now written will not do that.

There are many parts of the second Walkerton inquiry report that the bill does not address and indeed contradicts. Not only does this bill do absolutely nothing to ensure there will be no more tragedies like the one we saw in Walkerton, but the government is not taking full

responsibility for keeping pollutants from the application of nutrients to soil out of our water. I want to explain to you why this is so and express again my disappointment that the government didn't recognize this and accept the amendments. I'm going to outline briefly to you what the NDP recommended to give the bill some actual teeth.

We introduced a bill to restore public confidence, as you know, in the drinking water in Ontario, Bill 3, the Safe Drinking Water Act, which takes concrete and practical steps to protect our water. This is an important bill and part of the recommendation from the Walkerton inquiry report, part two, that a Safe Drinking Water Act be passed in Ontario.

1600

I'm pleased at this time to say that finally, after almost two years of the government saying no to that bill—in fact, a former minister, when I asked him a question about it, referred to it as “more red tape,” which has generally been this government's attitude toward environmental protection. In fact, when the Red Tape Commission was set up, the Ministry of the Environment was the ministry that was picked on most. That tells the tale of this government's attitude toward the protection of the environment.

But I'm happy to say we'll see what happens. I am working with the Minister of the Environment to amend my bill, because certainly I concur that my bill was written based on American legislation, along with some new ideas of my own, to protect Ontario's drinking water. Judge O'Connor recommended four separate pieces of legislation to encompass all of his recommendations—98 in part two, I believe, and I think it's 24 in part one. It does change to some extent the focus of the Safe Drinking Water Act that I've proposed. I have been promised that the integrity of my bill will not be destroyed when the government makes new amendments, although it could be changed substantively. We will see.

I appreciate the government's offer to bring forward my bill and have it passed, and as long as it does what the safe drinking water bill should do and protect the drinking water of Ontario, and it actually enhances the bill, then I will be very pleased to go forward with it.

I want to talk to you about the bill, directly relating it to the recommendations from Justice O'Connor and why the bill doesn't fulfill the recommendations from him. As it stands right now, Bill 81 says that the ministry responsible for overseeing and regulating the nutrient management plan is the Ministry of Agriculture. The minister and I have had discussions about this and we disagree, and she'll probably speak later and say why. But Justice O'Connor's recommendation 11 from the second Walkerton report states that, “The Ministry of the Environment should take the lead role in regulating the potential impacts of farm activities on drinking water sources.”

Justice O'Connor did take a lot of time to listen to many, many people who came to speak to him about the need for this kind of bill, and certainly it was recommended to him by various groups that the Ministry of the

Environment should be the ministry—an enhanced ministry, I should say. The minister is perhaps going to speak about the fact that they haven't done a very good job of regulating various farm difficulties in the past. I would say to the minister that's largely because their government cut the Ministry of the Environment to the bone, and she knows that.

We know that across the province all kinds of environmental laws and regulations are not being fulfilled. From the government's own draft cabinet document—as you know, I was leaked a copy of that document and it was used in the House to show the government that even officials within the Ministry of the Environment were saying that less than 10% of all sources of pollution in this province were being dealt with. That's a pretty scary number. They did recommend more staff, and that is one of the problems. Certainly we are saying the resources have to be increased, and we tried to get that inserted into the bill, but to no avail.

Justice O'Connor is wary—and he made this very clear—of a potential conflict of interest in having nutrient management under the jurisdiction of the agricultural ministry. The Ministry of the Environment has the regulatory lead for all other aspects of drinking water management, and he said very clearly that the Ministry of the Environment should be in charge of all of the aspects of protecting our drinking water.

He also expressed concern about allowing the fragmentation of responsibility of water protection, leading to a lack of clarity about roles and accountability, and that could indeed reduce the effectiveness of water protection enforcement.

That's something I say quite candidly. It's something I noticed when we were in government as I became concerned about safe drinking water then and saw the need for legislation to bring it all together, and we had started to do that. Over the years, protecting our water was built up in a piecemeal fashion with a lot of guidelines and regulations, but not with a very clear, cohesive body to take care of all the water issues, which are very complex, as we are finding out.

I'm going to talk to you about another concern, and I want to put on the record that it is no doubt controversial. This is where the Minister of Agriculture, under this bill, will privatize all aspects of approval, monitoring and enforcement of the nutrient management plans. That's in section 55. We all saw, particularly when it happened so quickly without enough notice for municipalities, what privatized monitoring did in Walkerton.

To be fair here, it's important for me to point out that Justice O'Connor does not give a definitive view around the issue of privatization, but he does point out the disaster privatization caused in the UK. The NDP submitted an amendment to section 55 that replaced this section with a statement that the MOE is responsible for all the aspects of approval, monitoring and enforcement of the nutrient management plans, with no power to delegate these responsibilities to anyone who is not an employee of the ministry. This was also voted down.

We also stated that the legislation, and we're very concerned about this, can supersede any stronger bylaws. Justice O'Connor stated that he feels that once the regulations are in place and a farm has a ministry-approved individual water protection plan in place—I'm quoting him here—"municipalities should not have the authority to require that farm to meet a higher standard of protection."

As I understand it, Justice O'Connor's concern is based on the fact that he feels farmers are feeling they're being attacked on all sides and was trying, I think very hard, to take their concerns and issues into account. But what it is important to recognize here in the context of this bill is everything else he said about it. He recognizes in the report that when it comes to source protection plans, those should be developed as much as possible at the local watershed level by those who will be most directly affected. Those are municipalities and other affected groups.

So this is a different approach to nutrient management plans, because each local watershed faces its own unique ecological and geological issues, and therefore one size fits all doesn't work. Indeed, there's a Supreme Court precedent in favour of the municipalities' ability to pass stronger bylaws with the Hudson, Quebec, case, where the judge ruled in favour of a bylaw that superseded federal and provincial laws to protect the health and well-being of its citizens. That was the pesticide bylaw.

We proposed to amend section 60 to stop this legislation from superseding stronger municipal bylaws, allowing a municipality to develop bylaws with higher standards, and this was voted down as well. We heard from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which also had trouble with this particular clause. To have all their powers for land use planning in rural areas taken away is, to put it mildly, a big problem for them, because each area has individual issues and problems they have to deal with and which cannot be dealt with—

1610

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): They can do that through watershed regulation.

Ms Churley: Well, it's not going to happen. There's nothing in that bill that suggests it is. What's happening here is that we have a bill that is mostly going to be written by regulation. The province can supersede bylaws, but those watershed plans have not been done and the bill is about to be passed.

Judge O'Connor is concerned that the Nutrient Management Act does not deal with other aspects of agriculture that could threaten our drinking water, such as the handling of pesticides and fuels. Again, he suggests changing the purpose of this act to regulate any potential impacts of agriculture on drinking water sources. Now, the NDP did submit two amendments to deal with that specific recommendation from Judge O'Connor. There were two amendments: one to add his suggestion to the purpose clause and one to add pesticides and fuels to the list of materials to be included in nutrient management plans. The amendment to the purpose clause expands the

purpose of the legislation to deal with regulating all potential impacts of agriculture on drinking water sources, and expands it not just to protect the natural environment but human health. This was voted down as well. We proposed an amendment to section 6.1 which would have added fuels and pesticides to the list of agricultural materials to be included in the nutrient management plan. This was also voted down.

Another concern from Justice O'Connor: he recommends a two-tiered system for regulating nutrient management plans—the standard plan, and a more stringent plan for farms that pose a higher risk to drinking water because of farm size, intensity or location. Here's what Justice O'Connor had to say about that: "All large or intensive farms, and all farms in areas designated as sensitive or high-risk by the applicable source protection plan, should be required to develop binding individual water protection plans consistent with the source protection plan."

He goes on to recommend that those plans be filed with the MOE. The NDP introduced an amendment that requires the NMPs for large and intensive farms, and for all farms in high-risk areas, to be approved by and filed with the MOEE. That too was voted down.

People across Ontario have worked incredibly hard in some areas, including the minister's own area, to fight intensive farming in their communities for fear of environmental impacts, and particularly for fear of their water. In fact, Huron county is a prime example. I suggest that every member in this Legislature has received some correspondence from residents in the Huron county area who have been fighting the large increase in what are called intensive farms in their area for some time. In fact, residents of the municipality of Ashfield successfully fought to get an interim control bylaw to regulate the spreading of manure in June 2000. This was challenged, but in court the bylaw was held up.

Surrounding communities around Huron county were facing similar issues, so that county took on a comprehensive study and struck a committee that developed a county model bylaw that they encouraged all municipalities within Huron county to implement. There are other areas as well that did the same thing and after all their efforts and years of hard work to protect their community, they're now very concerned, and quite rightly so, that it will have been for nothing if Bill 81 passes in its current form, which seems to be what we're about to do here today.

There are many concerns that I stated here today, and others, which unfortunately make it necessary for the New Democratic caucus to vote against this bill, a bill that we have been struggling to try to improve and make amendments to for some time, to no avail, so that we could—all of us—support the bill. We do believe that it should be brought in, but it's not going to do what we need to have such a bill do, particularly after Walkerton.

I've outlined many of our concerns. I did want to talk about one other area before I close, and that is that we don't know when the regulations are going to be drafted.

There was an amendment put forward I believe by the Liberals on putting in real time constraints so that we know the government will be coming forward in a timely fashion with those regulations. As we know, it has taken a very long time for this bill to come before us. It's now two years, and the clock is ticking. When we look at how much of it is really dependent on the development of regulations, we wonder when these regulations are ever going to see the light of day. The NDP did in fact place an amendment to ensure that those regulations must be in place within six months to protect our surface water and our groundwater, and the government said no to that.

The problem here is that although I support the goal that the government brought forward some time ago, this idea for a nutrient management bill, what we're left with here is a bill that stands far short of fulfilling its promised goal, that is, protecting our soil and waters from pollution from the application of nutrients, and it falls far short of fulfilling the recommendations of the Walkerton two report, recommendations that the Premier of this province said his government would implement every one of.

Already the government has broken its promise. I just want everybody to know that Ernie Eves's promise on implementing every single one of Justice O'Connor's recommendations is already broken, because the first opportunity came when we made those amendments to the nutrient management bill to encompass the recommendations from Justice O'Connor, and the government turned them all down. So there's a promise broken on those recommendations.

The bill indeed leaves all the important details to regulations. It doesn't provide additional resources for enforcement. It doesn't use the precautionary principle, which is absolutely critical in terms of preventing future disasters. It doesn't include golf courses, another potential source of pollution. It doesn't provide for the publication of nutrient plans on the EBR. It doesn't hold the government liable for keeping our water clean and safe. And it flies in the face of a recent Supreme Court decision and actually replaces, in some cases, even tougher rules that local citizens may pass in their own municipality.

I want to, before I end, talk about why some of those amendments were so incredibly important after the tragedy in Walkerton. If you read through the mounds of transcripts that were provided by experts at the Walkerton inquiry, what some experts talked about in terms of bacteria in wells across the province was truly frightening. When you understand and know what is happening in those wells, in our water supply, it underscores how inadequate this bill is in terms of dealing with it.

Studies submitted to the inquiry, and I've read many of them, establish that over 150,000 wells in Ontario may be contaminated by bacteria in excess of the maximum levels from the Ontario drinking water objectives. These studies indicate that contamination results twice as frequently in fields where manure is regularly applied. There are studies that show that. The evidence at the inquiry also indicated that the pathogens contained in the

manure can survive in soil for months or years and may travel through the soil, entering underground aquifers kilometres away from their point of origin. Nutrient management plans, as now defined, will not prevent manure contamination of our drinking water, because they focus on the nutrient requirements for growing crops primarily but they fail to address the pathogens in the manure. That is one of the biggest problems, and it's something that Justice O'Connor addressed.

The nutrient management plan, as proposed by this government, is proposing by regulation to, basically, simply make mandatory nutrient management planning, agricultural best management practices and environmental farm plans.

1620

This is a limited regulatory approach and may be no more successful than the present system. What we need is a risk-based approach to water resource management, which will require things like aquifer mapping and vulnerability assessment programs with continuing monitoring. Those are the things we need in place in this bill to prevent another Walkerton from happening. The amendments that were made to provide for some of these things to be in this bill were turned down.

So I'm disappointed and sad to say that the NDP has no choice but to vote against this bill. I'm sure it's in vain, but I would call upon the government to recognize that it is already breaking promises made about implementing all the recommendations from the O'Connor inquiry—

Hon Mrs Johns: How?

Ms Churley: Because he's recommended things that you should change in this bill, and you're not doing it. So there are promises broken already. The government not accepting some of these recommendations put forward by the NDP means that, already, certain recommendations will not be implemented.

The Acting Speaker: I don't see Lisa here, but Lisa wanted me to point out that her mom, Judy, and her aunt, Sheelagh, are in the visitors' gallery. I told her I can't do that. Lisa, of course, is a page here from Owen Sound.

Welcome. We're glad you're with us today.

Further debate? The Chair recognizes the hard-working minister from Huron-Bruce.

Hon Mrs Johns: Welcome to the fine people of Bruce or Grey.

I want to talk for a minute about the nutrient management bill, and I have to say, before I get too far into the discussion, how disappointed I am at how long this has taken to come to fruition. I am saddened because rural municipalities all across this province needed to have this bill in place. We needed to be working on regulations much earlier. When they hear the timeline that has gone on over the last year and a half to two years in this House, I think people who are listening will be amazed by just how long it has taken. It's probably sorrow, anger, some of those emotions, I am expressing today about that time.

This is a good piece of legislation, let me say first of all. It's legislation that the people of the province wanted. It's supported by the agricultural community, municipalities and environmentalists—not all sides of it. There are things that need to happen that we will look at as we proceed through regulations, but everybody believes this is a bill that is needed in the province of Ontario. In fact, all across North America, we see jurisdictions starting to bring in nutrient management legislation.

From looking at the timeline, you can recognize that we introduced the bill in June 2001. I wasn't the minister at that point. I believe it was Ernie Hardeman, the member from Oxford. In an effort to try to co-operate he suggested that we put this bill out right after first reading so that we would have time to garner issues, hear concerns and talk to the community, because it's a technical bill. Although some jurisdictions have moved forward, there were new things we were trying to do in the province, so we tried to co-operate.

When everyone went out for consultations, it was a pretty co-operative process. I was at one in my riding in Holmesville, and the Liberals and NDP were there. We were sussing out information, we were hearing things that we hadn't heard before, and we made some amendments to the bill after first reading—maybe not amendments everybody wanted, but we certainly came together and agreed on a few amendments. In some cases we said, "We really need to consider that when we get to the regulations side of this because we can accommodate that concern in the regulations."

We spent a lot of time out there in consultations. We had hundreds of submissions that the ministry received and we had many days of hearings. Clearly the public favoured the bill. I say quite clearly that they're antsy a bit at what will happen as a result of the regulations, but they know it's important to harmony in rural Ontario. They understand that this needs to become law, and the government wanted to see that it became law.

Unanimous consent would have seen this bill passed on one of the last days of the previous session, but that wasn't to be. I have to say the opposition Liberal Party asked for unanimous consent, and I was actually very grateful to them. This is a pretty hot issue in my riding, and I was very grateful that they called for unanimous consent for second and third reading of this bill. In fact, I am very grateful that they have moved along with us. They also have a lot of rural members. All of us who represent rural ridings know we need to have this bill done.

When the Liberals called for unanimous consent, Conservatives gave unanimous consent, but we weren't able to get unanimous consent from the third party. So we salvaged it, if you will, over that time. We pulled it forward from first reading. The Liberals agreed with us at that time and we brought this bill forward into the new session.

Again we sought the co-operation of the opposition and the third party for quick passage. Again it was denied and we once again did what the opposition wanted us to

do. If you can believe it, we went out to committee a second time. In the spirit of compromise we scheduled two more days of hearings. One was to hear from delegations and the second was to go through, clause by clause, the amendments one more time. In exchange the opposition agreed to unanimous consent.

I'm going to put this on the record. It's in Hansard. I'm going to quote from Steve Gilchrist in committee. It appeared on May 29, 2002, and it's in the record of proceedings: "The government House leader had made an offer to the two opposition parties, and we all agreed not to delay the passage of the bill, but to allow one more opportunity for input at this final stage, the trade-off being more time in committee hearings and one hour of third reading debate." No opposition member challenged Gilchrist at that time, said, "That wasn't the agreement we made." No one entered any dissenting opinions about that.

Then the two days of hearings were held. I was fortunate enough to be able to go and hear the people talk about things they would like to see, sometimes in the bill, sometimes in the amendments. We heard those issues, we thought about them and how about we might be able to do some of those things. In the Walkerton inquiry that everybody's talking about today, Justice O'Connor said this nutrient management bill, Bill 81, was a good format for us to be able to proceed forward. Is it perfect? He said no, he'd like to have fuel discussed in it and pesticides discussed in it. We had a discussion about that and how we might link the bills and decided we'd best leave that for the water safety act that should be coming forward. But he said this was a good format to commence talking about farm nutrients and how we would best deal with them.

So on June 12 John Baird asked for unanimous consent to fulfill the last part of this agreement, and that was one hour of debate on third reading. Once again, let me say that as I understand it the Liberals agreed to this and once again the third party said no. Once again—we're now at over a year of this being in the House—the nutrient management bill was derailed. It really makes one wonder whether they ever had any real intent of supporting this legislation. They say they are so concerned about the environment and they say they are the stewards of the land, yet when we bring forward a bill that talks about the agricultural community being stewards of the land, the NDP decides that they're not prepared to go there.

1630

I have been frustrated. I do speak with sorrow about how long this has taken. We're coming to the end this time, thank heavens, but it's only because we had to do time allocation. What that means is we have to put a halt to the debate, after all of the debate that has gone on, on this bill. You will hear no one tonight talk about how horrible this bill is. You will hear no one talk about things that can't be fixed through regulations in this bill. That's just not what is going to happen. This is just us being political and not working for the best interests of

our communities, and in this case, unfortunately, it's the communities I represent, which are rural Ontario.

Let me tell you about the consultations that have gone on. I can't talk enough about them. After all, last December the Liberals agreed that there had been good consultation on the bill. That's why they called for unanimous consent. They believed there were good consultations on the bill too.

Let me tell you about the consultations. The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London is the Liberal agricultural critic and he's on the record as saying, "There is no doubt that every one of us has called for this legislation; that there is a need for province-wide standards; that we can't allow municipalities to have a hodgepodge of standards across the province." His colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex said, "Municipalities like Chatham-Kent need Bill 81 now, and not in the distant future." That's how I feel too, representing the riding of Huron-Bruce. Yet when we called to bring it forward again this year, back we were to committee.

I am saddened by that, but I have to tell you that a number of groups on the outside have been very supportive of us trying to move this process forward. Once the process was derailed a couple of weeks ago, when we called for unanimous consent and didn't receive it for the one hour of third reading debate, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture wrote what I considered a nasty letter to the NDP urging them to stick to the deal of May 29. They played games with this, and even though the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition wanted the legislation passed, it has still been held up for a year in the House. So people who have really needed it—and I think of the Ontario Pork association in my riding, which has been calling for this, because we've had this hodgepodge of things going on across the province. People don't know about the regulations. They need to have regulations so that people begin to feel comfortable that they're doing the right things in the province. They called for it and, once again, it fell on deaf ears.

That's why we're in time allocation. I don't like time allocation probably any more than the next person, but I have to tell you, I don't think I ever would have got this bill out of this House. I think I would be 102 and this bill would still be in the House if it wasn't for time allocation.

I have to tell you today that this is the right thing to do. It's the right time to get time allocation. It's the right thing to get this bill out and get some consultation done on the regulations. It's the right thing to do because the rural community needs this bill.

I talked about the process that went on in the House, but there was also consultation that went on outside of the normal House proceedings. I know the member from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, Toby Barrett, is going to talk about some of the extensive consultations that happened when he was there. But I need you to know that Mr Barrett and Mr Galt went out and had discussions before any of this happened, too, before we even got into the House. So there has been a lot of work done on this bill.

As someone suggested earlier, there have been a lot of ministers tied to this bill too. There's no question that it was brought forward by Minister Hardeman at the time. He had done a lot of work on that. It was also worked on through the House by Minister Coburn, and Doug Galt, who was his parliamentary assistant, contributed to bringing Bill 81 to the Legislature. So you can see in the context I'm talking about today that we have really spent a lot of time on this bill. And I don't think it's all well spent. I think what we should have done was put the bill through and then spent a lot of time on the regulations. That's where the tough part is going to come, and we didn't do that. We spent our time here.

When we are in this House it's a privilege that we are granted. The privilege that we have is to protect our communities, both my community as the member who represents but also the community of Ontario. We all have that responsibility. We are blessed with countless lakes and rivers. We are blessed with fertile, productive soil in this province and with hard-working, committed people. It's a privilege and it's a responsibility and here in Ontario each and every one of us has a role to protect our environment—our water, our land and our air. This government knows this and that's why it acted on this specific bill, Bill 81.

That's also why we launched Operation Clean Water in August 2000. Operation Clean Water calls for a province-wide effort to improve water quality and delivery and it does it through a number of different methods: through the introduction of exacting but clear standards, through effective inspection and enforcement and through tough penalties for non-compliance and strategic problems. Because our water and our land are important and they're connected so closely, we must bring this same approach when it comes to managing the land and the nutrients we apply to the land. Bill 81 is an integral part of that process as we move forward to manage our water in the future and to bring in the recommendations of the Justice O'Connor report. He says very clearly in this report that nutrient management, Bill 81, is a good first step.

Interjection.

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say to the member opposite that what's important about this is it maintains a balance in rural communities between the economic viability of the farm and our ability to have strong environmental protection of that land so we can be good stewards of the land. It's a very important bill and if you came to rural Ontario and to my riding, you would see how important it is as we try to find harmony in our communities, as we try to find a way to live together so that the agricultural community coexists with the rest of us who live in urban settings in rural Ontario.

We know we have a lot of work to do on this bill in the future. We know that we have to look at land applications of materials containing nutrients, including livestock manure, chemical fertilizers, biosolids, septage and pulp and paper sludge. We are very committed to making sure that we have the legislative and the regulatory provi-

sions to be able to do that. What I mean by that is that we have to develop over the next few months guidelines and best practices and we have to get rid of this patchwork of municipal bylaws we have all across the province, which wasn't working for everyone. We have to be in a better system that controls what happens to our land, because it is so important to us. We have to realize that there's a really critical role for municipalities in rural Ontario. They have been consulted as we have gone around the province to ensure that their role coexists with the role of the province and coexists with the role of agricultural member. It's that partnership between all of us that is going to make the nutrient management bill work.

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One of the things I've been very clear about as I've spoken across the province as Minister of Agriculture and Food is that we in the agricultural community need to have this bill work. We need to be able to stop the discord that is happening in rural Ontario. Nobody in the agricultural community wants to be at fault for in any way polluting our environment. This bill calls for us to work together. Justice O'Connor talks about how the Ministry of Environment, in consultation with OMAF, should work together to ensure we get the right mix.

We need to be talking about education, we need to be talking about training and we need to be talking about enforcement. Justice O'Connor says there's a role for everybody there, that we need to work together, that OMAF needs to be talking about how they can educate and train the people in rural Ontario so that they understand what the best standards and the best practices are today, and how, when there is a bad apple out there, we make sure we enforce these regulations.

I'm a firm believer that 99.9% of my agricultural community, which I am so privileged to represent, does the right thing, because they're stewards of their land. What we have to do for the sake of all the agricultural community is to get rid of the few bad apples across the province who aren't doing the right thing. This bill will allow us to do that.

We will spend the time, we will educate, we will train and then we will enforce. We will make sure we have the authority to be able to do each of those three important tenets that are discussed in Bill 81.

I know there's been a lot of talk happening about this bill. I know people probably are a little tired of hearing about this bill. But I have to say that today is a great day for rural Ontario, for municipalities, farmers, environmentalists, tourists and people in the small urban centres in rural Ontario, because finally we're going to be able to get the framework process started, because after today we have to call the bill and then of course it will then be called for the vote.

Over the summer we can start to work on standards and regulations we can enforce; we can work on standards and regulations that will protect the water and the environment; we can work on standards and regulations that will ensure our agricultural communities and our

rural communities can continue to work in harmony and thrive in the important things they do in the community.

One of the things that will be important about this bill, I believe, when we look back on this bill in 20 years and see how the regulations have evolved over that time, is that this will be one of the pinnacles or lynchpins when we talk about how food in Ontario has evolved. We know we have safe, high-quality food in Ontario, but we know—Mr Speaker, you and I because we represent large agricultural ridings in the province—that it's continually changing and evolving.

I believe that as we deliver this Bill 81 and the regulations that go with it, and we educate, train and enforce, what will happen is that we'll get more harmony in rural Ontario. We will find that balance that is so necessary to find between the economic viability of the agricultural community and the ability for us to be good stewards of the land, to ensure that land is there for this generation and for generations to come, whether it stays as agricultural land or whether it be land surrounding that that may be tourist land or may be a factory.

We all need to work together in partnership because we have lots to gain by passing this piece of legislation. We have lots to gain by putting this framework in place so we can ensure that we are all working toward common goals. We have lots to gain because we'll all understand where we are today and where we're going in the future.

Clear, consistent standards, regular audit and inspection, orders of compliance issued as required and authority to enforce the regulations, will bring about harmony in rural Ontario, will ensure that in years to come rural Ontario provides the quality of living that we all moved to rural Ontario to make sure we have.

From that perspective, I do want to say that a great deal of thanks is owed to the people who did a lot of work on this. There's a lot left to be done on this, and I expect to have help from all the groups who are interested in this as we proceed through the regulation stage this summer and fall. I have every intention of bringing all of the groups together as I do that.

I also want to say that along with consulting with the public on the regulations, I need people to understand and to know that the Ministry of Environment, OMAF and health, of course, are working internally to make sure we're doing the right things, are bringing the regulatory minds of the Ministry of Environment together with the comprehension of the agricultural community through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. And we're bringing the medical model from health together to be able to compile regulations that are important.

I guess I should also say that we're bringing this report with us too as we go to prepare regulations, because this presents a good guideline of things we need to think about, places we need to go. I believe it will lead us, with all the other groups I have mentioned, to bring a very comprehensive bill together that I think the people of the province will be very proud of.

I know that my parliamentary assistant, Toby Barrett, wants to speak to this bill, so I will close by saying that,

as much as this has been a long time coming and I know we've had our differences, I know that everybody in the House agrees that this is an important step to ensuring that we have a strong framework in place in the province. I ask all to vote for this bill when it comes before us the next time we talk about nutrient management. I also thank them for their behind-the-scenes commitment to maintaining rural Ontario as the wonderful place it is to live, work and raise wonderful families such as mine.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): Let me begin by commending our critic for agriculture, the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London. He's done a marvellous job for our caucus and I believe for the people of this province. He's been a contributor in many, many ways to this piece of legislation.

Let me refer back to the remarks made earlier by the Minister of Environment and Energy and the House leader for the government. He was very critical of the opposition parties. He was lamenting the fact that we were not going to pass this piece of legislation as quickly as he would like and as quickly as his cabinet colleagues would like, to get it through the House in a very hasty fashion. He was lamenting all of this as though it was the worst thing possible that could happen.

There are very legitimate reasons why we in the opposition wanted to have the opportunity to debate this legislation properly. Most of what's contained in this bill—and by the way, this is not even a total bill yet because it lacks so much substance. So much of what's going to impact nutrient management remains to be passed by way of regulation. Frankly, we're not going to see those regulations before this bill is passed, so we're not going to know if these are effective regulations that are going to be passed. In fact, this government has done that so often in this House, have completely disregarded the assembly and the meaningful contribution members can make to a piece of legislation.

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Hon Mr Stockwell: When do you see regulations before the bill is passed?

Mr Cordiano: You don't, but so much of what's in the bill is left to regulation that this isn't even going to constitute a total bill. That's what I said.

The fact of the matter is, and I just want to point out, that a number of recommendations that were made by Justice O'Connor in his report aren't in this bill. That is a very reasonable thing to bring forward by way of making remarks, by suggesting amendments to this bill. That's what the opposition has done in recommending that Justice O'Connor's report be implemented. It was the Premier of the province who said he would ensure that every single recommendation of the O'Connor report would be implemented in this bill, would be part of this bill. That's not the case.

As has been pointed out by my colleague earlier, Justice O'Connor called for the Ministry of Environment to take the lead on this bill, and that is not part of this legislation. There is an ambivalence as to which ministry will lead in terms of this piece of legislation. That is

certainly not what we can support. We want the Ministry of the Environment to be the lead ministry to make sure that there is proper enforcement of this bill.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Can we count on the Ministry of Environment?

Mr Cordiano: That's another problem, I think, with the devastation that we've seen wreaked on the Ministry of the Environment by this government. This government says, "Trust us. Leave everything to regulations because you can trust us on the environment. You can trust us when it comes to safe drinking water. You can trust us when it comes to all of these matters that pertain to public health and safety." Well, the record just doesn't prove that. How can any of us trust this government with respect to safe drinking water, with respect to the environment?

When it comes to the Ministry of the Environment there is, as my colleague the critic for the environment pointed out this afternoon, an inherent conflict between the minister wearing two hats: the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Energy. There is a conflict right then and there.

As well, there are a number of reasons why we oppose the manner in which this bill is being brought forward, and with good justification. Look at what's left out of this bill, that will be left to regulations. We don't even know what constitutes a nutrient. That hasn't been defined. It's going to be left up to regulations. What can and cannot be spread on fields? That's going to be left to regulations as well. What is required as part of a nutrient management plan or strategy? Should there be different strategies for different sized farms? What size, how many different categories? Should small farms be exempt? When should these farms in these categories have to meet the requirements of Bill 81? What kind of storage will be required? How should that storage be built? Where should the storage be built? How much manure can be spread? When can it be spread? What kinds of soils? How far back from waterways, municipal wells, neighbouring properties and homes?

These are all very, very legitimate reasons why we have opposition to this bill, because so much is left to regulation, so much is left for the government to decide unilaterally by regulation. That's precisely what it means, isn't it, that the government will decide by way of regulatory changes the definitions that will be put in place to define this bill? I say it's just simply not good enough.

That's been the approach and the attitude of this government with respect to so many pieces of legislation since this government has been elected, going back to its first administration, when it rammed bills through this House with incredible speed and without any kind of consideration for whether they got it right. In fact, they had to reintroduce the property tax bill seven times because they couldn't get it right—seven times.

Mr Smitherman: Whose bill was that?

Mr Cordiano: It was the Minister of Finance, if I recall correctly.

Mr Smitherman: What was his name?

Mr Cordiano: The current Premier, Ernie Eves. He couldn't get that bill right and he had to reintroduce it seven times—technical difficulties.

Now we're talking about safety to human beings. Our drinking water is at stake. The food we eat is at stake. Is it any wonder that we want to make certain this bill is done properly and includes the solid recommendations of Justice O'Connor?

There are four reasons why we oppose this bill, and I just want to highlight those. I pointed out earlier that there is a lack of a lead ministry, and we want the Ministry of the Environment to lead with respect to this bill. The lack of regulations, as I've been talking about, is very critical. There is a lack of appropriate funding. Then of course there is alternative service delivery which the government has put in this bill and is nothing other than the opportunity to privatize down the road, which we oppose, because we believe the enforcement of this bill should be left within the public sector.

There are a number of good reasons why we have opposed this bill and why it is important for us to debate this thoroughly and, yes, bring it to committee to bring forward more of these amendments we've proposed which would rectify some of these problems, and not leave it to regulations, which will be done unilaterally by this government at some future date with no opportunity for debate—sometime in the future. That's just unjustifiable by this government, when it comes to this matter of crucial importance. We're not talking about something insignificant here; we're talking about safe drinking water and the land we need in terms of producing the food we eat.

We've seen time and again that this government has failed the people of this province when it comes to safety and the protection of what is important and in the public interest. Public safety should be the primary concern, and that's what we're referring to when we say we should take the right amount of time to ensure that this bill protects the public. That's what we're asking for. It's not unreasonable, contrary to what this government would have people believe. It's not unreasonable at all.

In conclusion, we support the concept of this bill but we do not support the manner in which it's being brought forward and how so much is being left to regulation. I will leave the rest of the time to my colleague the critic for the environment.

Mr Kormos: I'm glad Mr Cordiano left Mr Bradley some time. Mr Bradley was demonstrating some anxiety. I encouraged and exhorted Mr Cordiano to please leave the member for St Catharines some time, because the member for St Catharines has as important a set of comments, certainly, as Mr Cordiano.

This is a time allocation motion. New Democrats don't support time allocation motions. I certainly don't support time allocation motions. This is what it's all about. It's all about the government using its, yes, acknowledged power to cut short debate. Look, it ain't the opposition's fault that this took over a year to get passed. Well, it isn't. Anybody who suggests that is

being less than accurate. Anybody who suggests it's because of the opposition that this took a year to pass would qualify as the title of a recent and popular Jim Carrey movie—frequently, as a bald-faced title of a recent Jim Carrey movie.

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Acknowledged, this legislation went to a committee before second reading. You know, it's a good thing New Democrats sent it back to committee, because then came the O'Connor Walkerton report. The opposition was incredibly concerned about the adequacy of Bill 81 in the context of the recommendations of Judge O'Connor, and our environment critic produced a plethora of amendments, all of which addressed the O'Connor recommendations, the O'Connor requirements from the Walkerton inquiry, but not one of those amendments was considered in any meaningful way by the Conservatives. So they've come back to the House saying, "Oh, come on, guys, let's pass this." They're very sorry.

You see, it doesn't take that long to get legislation moved through the House. I see the bill as it currently stands, as it's printed, is in the name of the Honourable Brian Coburn. I trust that'll be changed to Helen Johns. Before that it was Mr Hardeman. Three successive Ministers of Agriculture clearly didn't have the clout or the interest—important—sufficient to get this bill dealt with. It's a simple matter of setting aside enough days for adequate debate. Will the bill pass? Of course it will. Could it have passed much sooner? Of course it could have. It was a simple matter of the government calling it. This government is no stranger to time allocation motions and has never shown any hesitation about using them. This bill required but three sessional days for second reading and, bingo, it would, as it did, qualify for a time allocation motion like today.

Would New Democrats have wished it was referred to committee of the whole? Of course, because that would have been an opportunity, and a very legitimate opportunity, for us to have made this bill more effective, especially in the context of Walkerton and Judge O'Connor's consideration.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): What is committee of the whole? Haven't seen that in a while.

Mr Kormos: Has committee of the whole taken place here in the last seven years?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Once.

Mr Kormos: But once, Messieurs Bradley and Bisson advise me, but once. How long was that for? Help me, Mr Bradley. Help me, Mr Bisson. Committee of the whole.

Mr Bisson: I think it was 1996-97.

Mr Kormos: Back in 1996-1997. Committee of the whole is a way for legislators to fine-tune a piece of legislation, to have the minister and his or her staff right there on the floor to respond to questions, put them on the record. New Democrats would have loved to have seen this bill go to committee of the whole, but no. This government is not interested solely in ramming legislation through, it's interested, more so, in determining

how few days it can sit rather than sitting sufficient days for its legislative agenda to be proceeded with, and in a manner which shortchanges the people of this province.

The environment critic for the New Democratic Party had amendments that made this bill responsive to Walkerton. The government chose to reject those amendments. I suppose the government will live with the consequences of that.

It remains, however, that this is a time allocation motion today. I do not support time allocation motions. I consider them an abuse of power on the part of the government, an illustration and an expression of disdain for the role of the opposition, and in fact an impediment to the appropriate operation of this or any other Parliament.

I want to make it clear: New Democrats aren't going to be supporting this time allocation motion—never have with this government; never will.

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I just want it on record that only this party has advocated fast-tracking into law this important bill for environmental improvement, Bill 81, the Nutrient Management Act. The opposition have fought so long and so hard for the last—it's been 13 months now—that you'd think they were against clean water and against environmental protection.

We know that Bill 81 is the proper vehicle to legislate best practices for the protection of our natural environment in general and, more specifically, the safety and quality of our water. It's also the best means to provide a sustainable future for agricultural operations and, by extension, rural development. Now is the time for us to work together to make such praiseworthy goals a reality, and I ask those present to pass Bill 81. We've certainly had enough discussion.

Before this legislation was drafted, this government—myself and the member for Northumberland—consulted extensively with farmers, municipal politicians, municipal officials, rural residents and environmental organizations. Since January 2002—in fact Dr Galt and I were involved in late 1999—we've been asking questions of many groups and individuals who are interested in this legislation, and also groups that may well be affected by this legislation. In keeping with this government, we have listened very closely to the responses.

We posted a discussion paper on intensive agricultural operations on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry for a 30-day period. We followed that up with seven public meetings. I co-chaired these meetings with Dr Galt. They were attended by 700 people. We started in Burford in my riding and went on to Glencoe, Clinton, Orangeville, Chesterville and Hastings. In addition, we received 200 written submissions and 420 completed questionnaires.

Over the summer of the year 2000, following a request from the Minister of Agriculture, we received another 125 submissions. That was followed up by 30 presentations made to senior ministry staff.

On into September of the year 2000, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture and Food—these are the ministries most closely involved with this proposed legislation—held group discussions in Guelph and they met with representatives of 65 different organizations.

In the year 2001, we continued our consultations. For the second year in a row, we spoke with participants at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, ROMA, at their annual conference, and for a second year in a row we received delegations from municipalities.

Then the bill received first reading. We posted the proposed Nutrient Management Act on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. It was posted for 60 days. This time 22 submissions were made during that period, and then after first reading, Bill 81 was sent to the standing committee on justice and social policy, which I chair. Nine public hearings were held across the province and 500 people attended those hearings. More than a third of those people attending, 37%, represented farm groups, 17% of those who participated spoke for municipalities and environmental groups were 12%. Also in attendance were various conservation authorities, private companies and individuals.

We travelled, as the standing committee, first to Caledonia and then on to St Thomas, Chatham, Holmesville, as the Minister of Agriculture has mentioned, Owen Sound, Kemptonville, Peterborough and North Bay. We also held hearings in Toronto. In addition, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food staff conducted numerous information sessions, both on intensive agricultural operations and on nutrient management. Again, as is characteristic of this government, we listened. We took all of the input, all of the concerns and suggestions into consideration when this legislation was drafted.

Then the standing committee on justice and social policy made its amendments. We also took into consideration concerns of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. These concerns were expressed in the July 2000 special report, *The Protection of Ontario's Groundwater and Intensive Farming*. The result we have is very specific protection for groundwater.

At this point I wish to quote and make specific reference to clause 5(2)(r) in Bill 81: "... that studies be conducted in relation to the use of materials containing nutrients on lands, including topographical studies and studies to determine soil types on those lands and studies to determine the depth, volume, direction of flow and risk of contamination of water located on, in and under those lands."

I feel this is very important because this legislation is all about clean water. By the way, these studies would also be consistent with Associate Chief Justice O'Connor's recommended watershed approach to protecting the quality and safety of Ontario's drinking water.

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We were also guided by the recommendations contained in the January 2001 *Managing the Environment* report. This is a report that shows that managing the

environment responsibly requires a new, concerted approach, drawing on the expertise and resources of many partners. To work together effectively, however, the roles and responsibilities of each of those partners need to be clearly defined. That's why this proposed Nutrient Management Act ensures that municipalities continue to be responsible for land use planning and approving building permits. It's also why this proposed law makes provisions for the creation of local advisory committees to provide advice, assistance and, if required, mediation. Working under the guidance of clear, consistent, province-wide standards, municipalities and, by extension, local citizens, would be able to ensure sustainable growth, safeguard the natural environment and make rural Ontario attractive for economic investment.

Regulations have yet to be drafted, as we know, but they could include, for example, making nutrient management plans mandatory. They could also set distance requirements for manure and other biosolids, distance requirements with respect to the application near wells and waterways. They could establish minimum quality standards and application standards for land-applied materials containing nutrients.

We want to ensure that possible regulations further our progress toward our goals of protecting the environment and sustaining the agricultural industry. Therefore we will develop them through not only discussion but also dialogue with farm leaders, environmental organizations, municipal officials and rural residents, both farm and non-farm. We have already begun a dialogue with those interested. We have mailed a questionnaire to 1,200 individuals across the province who represent farmers, environmental groups and individuals who perhaps participated in our first round of consultations regarding the proposed Nutrient Management Act.

Why would we do this? Again, several reasons. We want to know what these people want. People who will be most affected by the regulations to be drafted under this legislation believe that what is appropriate are standards that are effective and enforceable. The answers we receive from this questionnaire will give us a better understanding of a number of issues. For example, should the regulations be phased in over time? Should the regulations vary according to the size of agricultural operations? Should the regulations reference nutrient management plans as a whole or should they address specific elements of nutrient management plans?

The goal of distributing this questionnaire is, again, to stimulate ideas and dialogue. It puts forward options, it puts forward delivery models and it seeks input on all the various permutations and accommodations and all of the possibilities that may come under this set of regulations.

It is time to go on and take the next steps, to move Bill 81 forward and develop the appropriate regulations and standards, in concert with people across rural Ontario. But to do that, we need to pass this bill.

This bill had its first reading last June. This government tried very hard to secure passage of this proposed legislation late last year. More recently, in the speech

from the throne, the government reaffirmed its commitment to this proposed legislation: "Like Ontario's farmers, your government understands that protecting the environment is vital to the future of the family farm. It remains committed to the nutrient management bill, which would protect the environment by setting and enforcing clear, consistent standards for nutrient management on farms."

Now we are into another June. We must move on. It's something we must do for future generations. It's something we must do for the present generation as well. Taking action now, today, means that every one of us who lives in this great province of Ontario will reap the benefits, obviously, of a healthier environment, a stronger agrifood industry and more vibrant communities.

Mr Bradley: I always wish I were not debating a time allocation motion in the House. That's often how I have to start my remarks, saying I wish I were not debating it, but I am debating a time allocation motion. I find that most unfortunate.

I would rather be dealing with such things as the problems being confronted by children who have autism. Their parents have brought to my attention and the attention of other members of the House some available treatments and services that could help these children very much, especially if there's an early intervention. Yet that funding isn't available. There aren't enough staff people to be able to do it. There aren't enough spaces available in such places as the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre in our area, and as a result some of these children are missing out or their parents have to incur huge debt to be able to have the kind of service they believe is necessary to meet the needs of their children.

Or I would rather be dealing with the issue of Visudyne. After months and months of persistent questioning and pressure from this side of the House, the government finally capitulated. It was almost the last province to provide some funding for the Visudyne treatment, which is for people with a form of macular degeneration. But they cut it off in April.

I remember the great commotion that was created by the Premier of this province after he decided he was going to cover hepatitis C people, even though earlier in the discussions with the federal government, behind closed doors, the Conservative government of Mike Harris was opposing giving funding to hep C patients outside of a certain time parameter. The reason I mention that is that with Visudyne treatments they're going to pay only back to the end of the last fiscal year, in other words, starting April 1. A lot of people have already incurred the \$2,500 per treatment and have mortgaged their houses, sold their houses, cashed in RSPs and so on. I think the government has an obligation to pay right back to the time that Health Canada approved it as a treatment for macular degeneration. I hope the government will reconsider and do that. I'd rather be debating that today than a time allocation motion.

I would rather be debating the issue of pensions for disabled people and increased payments for them. I think

it's been since perhaps even the early 1990s that people with disabilities, people on a disability pension, have had an increase. Others in society have. These people struggle along having to meet the needs of increased utility costs and other costs, yet unless there's a specific change in personal circumstances, there's not been a general increase in those disability payments. They won't be going for holidays in Aruba; this will be going for basic needs if they receive those increases.

I want to as well deal with this particular bill—even though we're not on the bill itself, we're on the time allocation—Bill 81, known as the nutrient management bill. I always found the word “nutrient” to be rather amusing because we usually think of nutrients as something—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Well, most people think of it as something we consume, we eat, and it's nutritious to us. Nutrients in this case are something else. They're sewage sludge and things of that nature.

The concept of this bill is a reasonable concept. We're not here to slow down in any particular way, or at least block, this bill from passing, but we do believe the bill is deficient in many ways. Again, the concept is good. This problem has to be addressed. There are some good parts of the bill that are certainly supportable.

What was most disappointing was that when the bill came back to committee again for amendments, the government defeated all the amendments. My colleague Steve Peters, who is the Liberal critic in the field of agriculture, proposed several amendments which came directly from part two of the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, where Justice O'Connor—by the way, I thought Justice O'Connor did an excellent job. He was a good choice. When the government chose Justice O'Connor, I think some of our members particularly noted that they thought he would be a very good choice. If I'm not wrong, his brother was one of your predecessors—you're the member for Oakville—as Speaker. His brother was a member of this Legislature, whom I remember very well as well.

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I thought Justice O'Connor did a good job. He made some recommendations. He had a chapter on agriculture. What Steve Peters, the member from Elgin—who is, of course, the former mayor of St Thomas—did as Liberal agricultural critic was, he advanced and put on the table a number of amendments that would have improved this legislation. Unfortunately, the government members had instructions to defeat every one of the amendments. There were other amendments of a nature which required the expenditure of money. Opposition members, individual members, know we cannot advance amendments in committee which would obligate the government to spend money, but the government can do so. So Mr Peters recommended a number of amendments that would have strengthened the bill. Unfortunately, on all occasions, every one of the amendments was turned down, defeated, blocked by the government.

If we were truly looking for consensus in this House, if we really felt there were good ideas coming from outside, particularly from Justice Dennis O'Connor, if we really felt we should be implementing his recommendations, as the Premier has promised, then the committee and the government members on the committee would not have defeated the amendments that were advanced by the Liberal caucus.

So our main reason for opposing this bill in its present state is that there's too much left to chance—too much left to regulation. I would rather see as much as possible spelled out in the bill, so when it passes this Legislature we know exactly what's going to happen. Instead, this is what you would call almost enabling legislation. I know it has some provisions in it that are specific, but largely it allows the government to make regulations. Frankly, much of Ontario doesn't trust this government to make the kinds of regulations that would be helpful.

One of the other areas I want to address in this bill is that I believe, despite the Minister of the Environment having to wear three hats and be both the Minister of Energy and the Minister of the Environment—that's very difficult, and I've certainly stated that today. I had a wonderful exchange with the minister who—

Hon Mr Stockwell: The Deputy Premier.

Mr Bradley: Well, I tried, for instance, to get the Deputy Premier to answer, who I thought would have given a more environmentally sensitive answer than the Minister of Environment and Energy—who is mostly the Minister of Energy.

I want to see the Ministry of the Environment as the lead ministry. Again, I go back to the fact that whether people like it or not—and I know there are some polluters out there who don't—the Ministry of the Environment is a regulatory ministry. It is a ministry that goes out to see that people are adhering to the laws of Ontario, particularly the investigations and enforcement branch. As such, with its commitment entirely to protecting the environment and with this being an environmental problem, it should clearly be the lead ministry. Should there be input from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food? Of course there should. Those people who work for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food are familiar with agricultural practices. It's helpful to have their input. Nevertheless, the Ministry of the Environment should have the lead.

The Ministry of the Environment will also require staff to be able to enforce these regulations once they're in place—these mysterious regulations we will not see until after this legislation is passed. It will be up to the Ministry of the Environment to enforce it. I will tell you now that there are not nearly enough employees in the Ministry of the Environment with that specific expertise to be able to deal with that issue, so it will require a significant commitment of staff and funding to administer that part of the bill.

Some of the farmers will have a challenge to meet with this. I think it's reasonable for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food or the government, through one of

its ministries, to offer assistance to farmers to be able to implement these plans and meet the regulatory regime which will be in place, particularly the smaller farmers.

One of the concerns we have is with the growth in the size of farms. We have huge farms out there today, factory farms, as they're called in some cases. Jean-Marc Lalonde, the member for Prescott-Russell, has raised the issue, for instance, of pig farms in Ontario and the fact that in Quebec now they're banning further pig farms, I understand, these huge pig farms, at least, that you see out there. There's a fear that we'll see it more in Ontario because we know that they have the biggest challenges to meet. We want to be able to help the agricultural community to meet those challenges.

I wish we could introduce amendments that would allow for the expenditure of funds, in other words to help out in implementation of this bill, but we do not have that power and did not have in committee, which, as I said, is why Steve Peters was only able to recommend those to the government.

We had many questions, and one of my colleagues, Joe Cordiano, when he was speaking, asked a number of the questions that are unanswered. But, you see, with any legislation—when you're in opposition particularly, but I think even in government if you're not part of the cabinet—you want to see things spelled out. You don't want to leave it to somebody else to put the regulations in place, because the regulations are very specific. There are many communities in this province who are afraid that what the province puts into place will be much weaker than what they would have put into place as municipalities. This bill calls for a uniform approach across Ontario. That would be fine if the uniform approach were a tough approach, were an environmentally sensitive approach.

It reminds me, Mr Speaker, of federal-provincial conferences. I remember one person asking me on the radio—this person had run for the federal Alliance, so he perhaps had a reason to ask me this; he wanted to direct it to the federal government. He said, "Don't you think the federal government should have these rules for water?" I said, "You know what? The problem with that is that if you're a provincial Minister of the Environment, you don't want to have watered-down water rules. You may want to have very tough rules. Another province may want those rules not to be nearly so tough. So you want to have the toughest rules possible." So I often thought that while it's good to have a strong federal regulatory regime in place, often the provincial government wants, of its own volition, to make its very tough rules.

It's similar with the municipalities. Some municipalities are saying, "Look, there's a real problem with some of these huge farms that are coming close to residential areas." People will say, "You know, some of these farmers are responsible for polluting." It should be pointed out and people should remember that it's farmers themselves who are going to feel the effect of water pollution, because very often they don't have city water pipes out to the farming areas. They in fact have wells; they're rely-

ing on groundwater. That's a significant problem for farmers, so people need not think that the farmers are the perpetrators of the problem and are not victims of the consequences of those problems.

Last, this does not deal with human waste being spread on fields, from what you would call Johnny-on-the-spots—or Johnnies-on-the-spot; I can't think of the grammar of that for a moment—or what we used to call outhouses, where somebody came around and collected the material and then it got spread on fields. Well, that's a problem. The sludge from sewage treatment plants spread on fields often contains not only bacteriological contamination but also heavy metals and other things. You can't spread it on a frosted field, a field with three or four inches of frost on it, because it'll simply run off, and you can't spread it when it's been raining for 19 days.

So there are a lot of rules and regulations that have to be put in place not only for farming practices but particularly for those of us in the urban centres who decide that we're going to send our sewage sludge out to the farmland to be spread on farms across the province.

The bill itself offers some hope, but it is so deficient, so vague in specific areas, that I as an opposition member couldn't in all good conscience vote for the bill. Would I block the bill from passing? I would not block the bill from passing, but I would certainly urge the government, because the government would not accept those amendments to its legislation, to make those regulations as environmentally sensitive as possible, to have the necessary staff and rules in place to ensure that the tragedy of Walkerton, seven people dying and thousands becoming ill, does not recur in this province.

1730

M. Bisson: Merci, monsieur le Président. C'est un plaisir ici encore aujourd'hui sur une autre allocation du temps. Je peux vous dire, c'est l'habitude ici, hein ? Au moins deux fois par semaine, on a l'habitude de venir à cette Assemblée et d'avoir encore le débat sur une motion de clôture. C'est devenu l'habitude. Ça fait combien de fois ? Je regarde mes amis. Ça fait au moins quoi, 30, 35 fois qu'on a eu des motions de clôture ici à l'Assemblée ? Je me dis que c'est l'habitude, et c'est très triste. On aimerait beaucoup qu'on pourrait avoir un vrai débat faisant affaire avec les projets de loi pour être capables de regarder les projets de loi et dire ce qu'on a besoin de faire de positif à la loi, comment on peut la changer pour vraiment s'assurer que chacun des députés ici a une opportunité de faire les changements à la loi afin de représenter les citoyens qu'ils sont élus pour représenter.

Mais c'est devenu l'habitude, parce que ce qui s'est passé avec les changements au Règlement avec les années et aussi, je pense, la manière dont l'Assemblée elle-même a changé, c'est que le gouvernement se méfie plus de l'opposition en introduisant un projet de loi où qu'on n'a eu que trois jours de débat à la deuxième lecture et qu'on arrive à la quatrième journée avec une motion de clôture. Je pense que c'est triste.

Franchement, j'aimerais mieux avoir une Assemblée, monsieur le Président, comme vous l'aimeriez aussi, j'imagine, où il y a possiblement plus d'efforts de la part de l'opposition et du gouvernement de trouver des accommodations qui diraient, « Oui, le gouvernement, à la fin de la journée, est capable, et a le droit aussi, de passer leur loi parce que, après tout, ce sont eux qui ont eu la majorité dans les élections générales », mais l'opposition a aussi une responsabilité de faire ralentir le gouvernement sur certains projets de loi quand c'est une question importante pour l'opposition.

Je vous donne un exemple. Dans cette session, il va y avoir la grosse controverse, j'imagine, sur deux questions : le budget et la question de la privatisation de Hydro One. Sur ces deux projets de loi, quant à moi, il fait du bon sens que l'opposition a l'opportunité de faire ralentir le gouvernement pour être capable de faire des modifications qui sont plus acceptables au public qu'on représente. Mais sur un autre projet de loi, où c'est moins controversé, on peut avoir des accommodations, qu'on dit, « Oui, deux jours, une journée, trois jours de débat sur un projet de loi pour le passer, l'envoyer au comité, faire de bonnes audiences publiques, avoir le temps nécessaire pour faire notre devoir comme législateurs et législatrice » pour modifier la loi en comité et la ramener et avoir plus d'accord.

Mais je pense que ce qui est arrivé avec le temps—and ce n'est pas seulement ce gouvernement, franchement. Les trois partis ont tous la main noire quand ça vient aux changements à la réglementation, mais le Règlement ici à l'Assemblée a tellement changé qu'il est devenu parfaitement normal pour un gouvernement à cette heure, à ce point-ci, sur chaque loi, de passer une motion de clôture. Je pense, franchement, que c'est très triste.

J'espère que ce qui a eu lieu aujourd'hui à nos « meetings » des chefs parlementaires qu'on a eus avec les whips—que possiblement on peut commencer à regarder comment on s'organise à cette Assemblée pour que le gouvernement reconnaîsse et respecte le rôle de l'opposition et que l'opposition respecte qu'un gouvernement a le droit de passer sa législation.

I was just saying it's really a sad thing that over the years we've seen this place deteriorate to the point of now seeing, almost as the norm, bills passing into this House by way of closure motions. We're time-allocating virtually all bills through this Legislature. There's hardly a bill in this session or the previous sessions that has not been accompanied by a time allocation motion.

I think that's really sad because I think it reflects on all of us, not just the government members but the opposition members, on how this place has deteriorated to such a point that we're not able, as honourable members, to come to a degree of understanding about how we order business in this House.

This morning I thought it was rather an interesting House leaders' meeting that I attended, as the whip for my party. House leaders and whips get together every Thursday. We had a real donnybrook. We had one heck of a meeting where some frank discussions happened

among all three parties about how this place does not function any more. I'm hoping the meeting we had this morning may be the beginning of something positive where we're able to say, "All right, let's recognize, as an opposition, that a government has the right by election to pass legislation. They won a majority; they've got that right."

But the government has to recognize that an opposition also has a right on key issues that are important to it to have an opportunity and an ability, and the correctness, to be able to slow legislation down sufficiently to try to effect some change.

I propose the following: we have in this Parliament basically only two issues that are real issues to the opposition. The two are the budget debate—there are some issues in the budget that I'm sure both opposition parties have some problems with—and the Hydro debate. Those are two big issues that are going on in this Parliament. I suggest a very simple thing. I would wish that for the opposition and the government, in the process of the House leaders' meetings, we would be able to order business into the House in an orderly fashion and when there are bills of substance, ones the opposition has legitimate grief with, we're able to use our powers in opposition to be able to slow the legislation down to effect the changes we want.

We're all honourable members on this side of the House, as on the government side of the House. We were elected like everybody else. Frankly, the opposition made up almost 60% of the popular vote in the last election. So certainly there's a legitimacy to my point, that the opposition has to have an ability to have some effect on the government's agenda. On the other hand, where there are bills that are less controversial, there's an ability to make agreements that those bills pass quicker with less opposition, with a quicker passage as far as how we allow things to go through the House is concerned.

I would say to members on the government side who have never been in opposition, and the only time they have ever come to this place has been in government, that it takes some time on the opposition side and then being on the government side to understand that the way this place can really function is to have some rules that balance off the power the government has by virtue of its majority in the House.

We have had upwards of 30 closure motions in this House in the last couple of years. Almost every bill that has come into this Legislature has seen a closure motion. It's a reflection on this Legislature, and I don't think it's a very good one. I would hope that what we started this morning at the House leaders' meeting, by way of a pretty frank and heated discussion, was a process that hopefully will be able to come to some sort of agreement about how we order business in this House and the need not to introduce closure motions to deal with bills.

If we learned anything through the whole process this morning, hopefully that will come out of it. In the end, it would better serve the constituents we represent to be able to do that.

The other thing I want to say on the question of closure motions is that we need to reflect on how this Legislature needs to change the way it's organized, by way of the standing orders, and also by the way we elect people. I'm a firm believer that the issue here is that we need to change the way we elect people, to go to a system of proportional representation. It doesn't matter who the government is. If it's a majority government of any stripe, there's a really large temptation, because you hold all the power, to just ram your agenda through the house. It doesn't matter if it's New Democrats, Liberals or Conservatives; we've all had a hand in that. We've all equally pushed our agendas through to the utmost ability we had with the rules given of the day, and every government has changed the rules.

The only way I know we're able to change the rules effectively is by way of a minority Parliament. I'm hoping that at least that happens in the next election so we can get some balanced rules back into the House. But over the longer term, we really need electoral reform to say that the problem we have is that when you have government members, and I don't care what the stripe is, with 40% of the popular vote controlling better than 50% of the seats in the House, it's a really unhealthy thing.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): But if people don't pressure the government, they're not going to change the rules.

Mr Bisson: I agree. What I would propose, and this is one of the proposals we have as New Democrats and in fact we're having our provincial convention, our bi-annual convention, starting tomorrow in London, and one of the motions we're pushing through our convention is to adopt a position and a model of how we would do electoral reform if elected as a government so that we do move to proportional representation, because at the end of the day your vote counts. At the end of the day, when you vote in your riding, it doesn't matter whom you elect—it could be an independent or a representative of a party—that person has an equal amount of power, once they come here as an honourable member, to represent their constituency, and their vote is just as important as everybody else's, and conversely, the people who vote actually have a say. I think that is so important in modernizing our democracy.

I don't expect government members who first got here as a government to understand, because quite frankly I didn't get it when I got here as a government either. It took me some time in opposition to finally figure out that governments' excessive use of power is really not a healthy thing for the democracy we hold so true and dear to our hearts.

I look forward to fewer closure motions in this House and to the day we actually have some rules in here that balance off the need of the government to pass legislation and also the ability of the opposition to do its job.

1740

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I had hoped to speak longer to this bill, but the government House leader shortened my speech

considerably. I say to the government House leader, who's sitting across the aisle in the Liberal benches, I don't know if every member of this House has been down to see the new portrait of the government House leader, which is now open for public display. What a fine photo. If you watch the eyes, they follow you wherever you go in the hallway. We had trouble keeping a quorum in this place today and in the three committees because member after member wanted to see the photo. I have not seen such lineups in this place since Princess Diana died and people were lining up to sign the book of condolences. The schoolchildren were looking up with awe at the member for Etobicoke Centre, the government House leader. It is a lovely picture.

On his desk, on his credenza, there was a picture, and I thought, "Oh, there's a picture of Mike Harris on his credenza." I thought, "Wow!" I was surprised.

Mr Bradley: That was on his dartboard.

Hon Mr Baird: The member says it was on his dartboard.

As I approached closer, I found it was not Mike Harris; it was his family. It was his wife and two children. But for those of you here at Queen's Park, Will watching on TV and others—

Mr Marchese: Where is Will?

Hon Mr Baird: Will is in his office looking at me right now. He should go down and see the portrait.

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): Is the Shadow still after him?

Hon Mr Baird: The Shadow is still after him, I say to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, so he's cowering in his office.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this motion this afternoon about an issue which I think is pretty important. Nutrient management is important for agriculture and the quality of water.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: I want to say the Minister of Agriculture, like her predecessor, has fought so hard for this bill. In fact, when I was appointed, when I received the call to take on this position, someone said, "What is your priority?" I said, "One of my first priorities is to see the Nutrient Management Act passed." I'll tell you, this Minister of Agriculture has been all over the House leader, the deputy House leader and our caucus to ensure that this important piece of legislation is passed.

I believe, as most farmers in my constituency of Nepean-Carleton believe, in reasonable and responsible farming practices. In my experience, the operators of a family farm and operations of a small or medium-sized nature are always pretty good stewards of our environment. There is the odd exception, the odd bad apple, but most do a pretty good job. The odd bad apple does need attention, and I think this bill looks to establish some best practices. We want to ensure that we deal with nutrient management in a responsible way. We want to be mindful of the effects of the watershed, of aquifers and of our environment when we're undertaking farming practices.

We have a lot of cash crops in my constituency of Nepean-Carleton, not just soybean producers and corn producers, but also a good number of dairy operations, so this is certainly an important issue. As concerned as people are about the issue, they're also concerned that the Legislature pass this bill and that we get on to consulting with the many stakeholders about the regulations under this bill. I know the Minister of Agriculture is keen to begin that process once the Legislature passes this bill. When we have the opportunity to vote we can do just that, because we want to ensure that we sustain our environment and we want to ensure that we promote the best practices that are reasonable in farming, like the overwhelming number of farm operators in the province of Ontario currently do.

Hon Mr Hudak: The chicken farmers in Erie-Lincoln.

Hon Mr Baird: The chicken farmers in Erie-Lincoln—I know that's a big issue. As I am always talking about dairy producers and corn producers, the member for Erie-Lincoln talks about both tender fruit, the grape growers and the poultry industry. I suspect he's going to want to join me in supporting this important resolution because he's a big promoter of agriculture in the province of Ontario. He's an unabashed supporter of the wine industry in Ontario. The member has some interesting ways of helping to support that in all of his cabinet responsibilities, I understand, as has been reported on some occasion. Mine have been over-reported in that regard.

Bill 81 has been eagerly awaited. We've had a terrific amount of consultation. It's been posted on the environmental registry to get public input. The ministry has been out there listening. We've had a substantial amount of committee hearings on this. We debated this bill a lot in this Legislature.

One of the important parts about debate, as the Minister of Agriculture always says, is that you make a decision and you vote and that's part of the process. I think it's the opportunity, I think it's time and I think it's important that we do move to vote on this. That's what the resolution we're debating today is all about. It's about moving to the next stage of this long-delayed and eagerly awaited bill.

We know that Bill 81 is a proper vehicle to legislate best practices for the protection of the environment in general and the safety and quality of our water in the province of Ontario. We know that it's the best means of providing a sustainable future for agricultural operations. Even more than that, it's about rural development in the province of Ontario, because the agricultural industry remains one of the four cornerstones of the Ontario economy and as legislators we want to address what is an incredibly important issue for that sector, whether we represent ridings which are half suburban and half rural, such as mine, or are members whose ridings are more rural. I will be voting for the motion.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further debate?

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1748 to 1758.

The Speaker: All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Kiees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	Tumblin, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Guzzo, Garry J.	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hastings, John	Newman, Dan	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Marchese, Rosario
Bradley, James J.	Dombrowsky, Leona	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Duncan, Dwight	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Kennedy, Gerard	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 41; the nays are 11.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Trinity-Spadina has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Education. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

We'll just wait for a quick moment.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Speaker, they're all leaving. I thought they would be excited to listen to this five-minute discussion on education. Mr Guzzo stayed behind. I appreciate that. Ted, from Waterloo-Wellington, is staying behind; I understand he's doing the response. He's doing the minister's response today.

I want to let the public know what the nature of this dissatisfaction is with respect to issues of education, with

respect to the answer the Minister of Education gave, and I want to read it for the record, so people know. Here's the question I asked the minister a couple of days ago:

"The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario retained Lang Research to conduct its third annual school-based survey. This research shows, among many other things, a 7% drop in music teachers in the year 2001-02. Several scientific reports conducted all over the world to study the links between music and learning have shown that the study of music enhances math and science skills, and as well contributes positively to a child's social development. Students who study music also tend to have lower drop-out rates. Given this, Minister, how could you, as a former teacher, permit such a loss of music teachers in the system?"

She said, "I'd be happy to respond to the member from the third party, who I understand made an interesting presentation on Saturday"—that was in Sault Ste Marie. Her assistant was there—a good guy. She continues, "In regard to the issue you have raised, I think you are well aware of the fact that this year, in response to the messages we heard from the people of Ontario and the educational community, since Premier Eves took over we have already invested an additional \$350 million in the boards of education in Ontario. We also increased the amount of flexible funding."

Marchese goes on by saying, "It's an interesting response.... We have seen program reductions in special education of 31%," and on and on I go.

I want to say a couple of things with respect to that, because once I said to her that there have been program reductions in so many fields, she then answered—because my question was, "Which programs do you want the boards to cut some more in order to be able to fund music?" She said, "I'd like to know what data you're using. You're using all sorts of figures, and I guess I can pull all sorts of figures out of a hat, or I can talk about real numbers." Then she said, "It's very difficult to respond to you when you're using some facts. I don't know what you're basing your information on." That's the answer she gave.

So the first problem is that she says boards have flexibility. I am saying, based on studies done by People for Education—this is the elementary school tracking report, which I presume the minister says is not scientifically done, and the study that I referred to was by Lang Research, conducted by the Elementary Teachers' Federation. She says, based on these studies, they are not studies—Ted, I hope you'll address this—they're not real figures, they're not real facts. She's got some facts, she says. My point to her is, where are your facts?

I'm assuming Ted from Waterloo-Wellington is going to bring forth today the facts the minister has, because presumably to say we don't have the facts means that she does. I'm looking forward to hearing them, if you have them; I hope. Then the minister says that she's given so much money to the boards that they have flexibility. I say to her, with all this wonderful flexibility the boards have, how come they're cutting, there are program reductions?

This is the Elementary Teachers' Federation study, where 33% of all the elementary schools of the 2,500 answered this survey. You extrapolate and you get a good sense of what's happening in our system. The program reductions are: special education program reductions, 31%; library reductions, 30%; ESL, 11% I believe; music, 11%; design and technology, 7%; physical education, a 6% drop; family studies, a 5% drop. The list goes on and on.

What flexibility do boards have except to cut some more? There is no flexibility. There is inadequate funding. Unless the government addresses the issue of funding and addresses it today, people and boards like the Toronto Board of Education will have to cut another \$90 million, and that's unacceptable to the people of Ontario, and to the people of Toronto in particular.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I want to thank the member for Trinity-Spadina for requesting this late show because it gives me an opportunity to respond to some of the issues he's raised, which I know are of concern to him and perhaps to some other members of this House.

The government understands very well that music education is an important part of a student's overall educational experience. It is well documented and researched, as the member opposite has indicated, that the intellectual and emotional development of children is enhanced through the study of music, as is also the case through the study of a second or third language.

The government is committed to these programs in arts and languages that enrich minds and our culture. The new elementary arts curriculum sets high standards of achievement for every student in the province. It's designed to ensure all students acquire essential knowledge and skills in the arts through music, visual arts, drama and dance in grades 1 through 8. The music curriculum, in particular, even includes composition so as to inspire students to become future musicians and, possibly, future composers.

The curriculum creates an expectation that our excellent teachers will develop meaningful programs that enable their students to achieve the expectations for music in each grade. It's clear that our music curriculum gets results and teaches students the fundamentals of music appreciation, understanding of composition and how to read music.

I think it's also important to note that school boards and schools are responsible for determining how they will offer music, such as instrumental or vocal music, and other arts programs. The choice to hire arts specialists, such as music teachers, at the elementary level is indeed a local decision.

With that said, we acknowledge the importance of giving school boards additional flexibility when it comes to choosing the programs that best fit the communities they serve. That's why we have done just that. In the 1999 budget, we announced we would be providing support for the Royal Conservatory of Music's Learning through the Arts program in schools. As a result of this

beneficial announcement and wonderful partnership, we're providing \$3.65 million over six years to the Royal Conservatory, a world-class institution, to expand this very successful program from the greater Toronto area to other regions of the province.

Ontario's new secondary school program ensures that high school students also have exposure to the arts. The new program outlines that students are required to earn one compulsory credit in the arts. They may take an arts course to fulfill a second compulsory credit requirement. They have a broad array of arts disciplines from which to choose: comprehensive arts, dance, dramatic arts, media arts, music and visual arts. Again the courses offered in a particular secondary school program are a local decision.

I'm delighted to see that in last week's provincial budget we have again clearly shown that education is a key priority of the government.

Within two days of forming the new government, the new Premier announced that there would be \$65 million more available for new textbooks and technology-based learning materials. Less than two weeks later, the Premier and our new Minister of Education announced that \$25 million would go to expanding the early reading strategy and introducing a new early math strategy. Two weeks after that, the Minister of Education announced that education funding in Ontario for 2002-03 would increase by \$350 million to over \$14.2 billion. All

totalled, \$440 million was announced in additional funding for Ontario's publicly funded school system.

With that budget announcement, our government has added to this figure with a further \$117 million in funding for publicly funded schools. The funding for 2002-03 includes \$490 million in flexible funding. The May 1 funding announcement included \$200 million for boards to address local priorities, including music teachers. This increases the local priorities amount from \$100 per student to \$200 for every student in Ontario's public schools. In other words, since forming the new government in April and with my honourable friend, the member for Kitchener-Waterloo as Deputy Premier and Minister of Education, we have announced almost \$560 million in funding for Ontario students and Ontario school boards.

Under her direction and leadership, I am absolutely confident that the government will continue to consult with its stakeholders and do everything within our power to put students first and ensure that our schools have the resources they need to give every student the quality educational opportunity that they deserve as a right.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 6:45 pm this evening.

*The House adjourned at 1812.
Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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of Ontario

Third Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 20 June 2002

Jeudi 20 juin 2002



Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 20 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 20 juin 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

KEEPING THE PROMISE FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT (2002 BUDGET), 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LE RESPECT DE L'ENGAGEMENT D'ASSURER LA CROISSANCE ET LA PROSPÉRITÉ (BUDGET DE 2002)

Mr Chudleigh, on behalf of Mrs Ecker, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to implement the measures contained in the 2002 Ontario Budget and to implement other initiatives of the Government of Ontario / Projet de loi 109, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le budget de l'Ontario de 2002 ainsi que d'autres initiatives du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I'll be sharing my time this evening with the member for Oxford and the member for Nepean-Carleton.

This government has laid the foundation for a strong economy and an improved quality of life for all Ontarians. However, we recognize that we must also prepare for the future, to be part of a knowledge-based global economy. Our approach is to build a culture of innovation that rewards risk-taking and promotes research and development from the classroom to the boardroom. Partnerships between Ontario's publicly funded institutions and private companies, initiatives that further develop the province's biotechnology industry, innovations in health care and a skilled workforce are all essential in fostering innovation.

In the 2002 Ontario budget, our government has outlined a strategy that will move us toward our goal of being one of North America's top-performing jurisdictions for research and innovation. It's a bold goal. An additional \$2 million per year will be allocated to the \$30-million annual Ontario research performance fund. To this day, Ontario remains the only government in Canada that provides an ongoing program solely dedicated to covering the overhead costs of the research it funds.

We still hope the federal government will come on board and provide ongoing and adequate support to cover overhead costs of federally sponsored research—

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): False hope.

Mr Chudleigh: —but perhaps this is a false hope, as the member from Haldimand-Norfolk has pointed out.

We are also investing \$161 million to renew the Ontario centres of excellence program, which will help our small and medium-sized entrepreneurial firms access research expertise and commercialize inventions from publicly funded institutions. This has been a very successful program over the last couple of years, and having this new investment come on board is extremely exciting.

The province's Ontario Innovation Trust helps universities, community colleges, hospitals and research institutions develop the infrastructure they need for scientific research and technology development. The trust will be enhanced by \$300 million, bringing the government's investment in Ontario's research infrastructure to well over \$1 billion. These are major commitments to Ontario's innovative producers, the people who take the capital risks. These people are not only rewarded by this government, they also create the jobs of tomorrow.

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The research and development challenge fund will also be expanded by \$250 million, to promote research excellence and partnerships between industry and Ontario's research community, tying industry together with the people who do the research initially, which creates the opportunities of tomorrow. The challenge fund and the Ontario Innovation Trust work together to promote excellent research and increase research capacity in Ontario. Included in the announcements made in the 2002 Ontario budget, our government will have committed a total of \$1.8 billion to innovation through these two programs alone.

On June 14, the government announced a joint investment of more than \$11.5 million from both programs to the University of Waterloo and the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics. The funding will help establish an international research centre for quantum computing and information processing at the University of Waterloo's Institute for Quantum Computing, a leading edge. This will also enable the Perimeter Institute to promote the framework for the discovery, harnessing and commercialization of breakthroughs in theoretical physics. Starting in 2004-05, the government has committed an

additional \$15 million to the Perimeter Institute for three years, which gives a total investment of over \$25 million.

In full operation, the Perimeter Institute will be one of the largest research centres of its kind in the world. We expect that this will drive the technology revolution in Ontario in the years to come. This will attract established scientists from outside the province as well as retain our current scientists and train new ones. This is an unprecedented opportunity for Ontario to further identify itself as the home of innovation in both theoretical and applied pursuits, not only in Ontario, not only in Canada, but indeed around the world. We will also greatly assist the efforts of our other Ontario universities to recruit and retain exceptional scholars from a wide cross-section of disciplines.

Partnerships between research institutions and the private sector are also essential for the biotechnology sector. This government is doing everything it can to attract biotechnology investment in Ontario. On June 7, Premier Eves announced a \$51-million strategy to make Ontario a North American leader in biotechnology. Only last week we had the biotechnology conference in Toronto. This includes \$20 million for a medical and related sciences discovery district in downtown Toronto. We hope to create a community of researchers and companies working in partnership toward innovation in the medical and related sciences. This initiative could result in total public and private investment of over \$300 million.

This visionary initiative is about developing the critical mass of research capability and building an active and dynamic cluster of research facilities and private bioscience companies. The strategy also includes a \$30-million investment to create the biotechnology cluster innovation program to maximize biotechnology investment. This program will match grants up to 50% for the cost of developing regional innovation plans. In addition, it will offer grants to support commercialization centres, research parks and regional innovation networks.

We're not resting until we make Ontario one of the most competitive jurisdictions in North America for biotechnology investment. We are actively pursuing opportunities to double or triple research and development and other biotechnology investments in Ontario. This is the wave of the future.

Over the next few months, we will be seeking advice to announce a new multi-year tax reduction plan in next year's budget. A tax reduction plan in next year's budget; there's an innovative thought.

The biotechnology sector also helps us to be innovative with health care. In addition, we are committed to reform and innovation in health care. In this budget, we have doubled funding to \$100 million for the Ontario Cancer Research Network to support research for new cancer treatments. We have also funded telemedicine initiatives in 140 hospital sites across Ontario. Ontario's pioneering Telehealth system offers quality advice on an around-the-clock basis across the province to an average of 3,500 Ontarians each day. Some 3,500 people each

day use that Telehealth system. The establishment of the Ontario Family Health Network is starting to ensure that services are consistent with the reformed primary care system. And we provide support for innovative new partnership opportunities between service providers to improve accessibility to diagnostic services like MRIs and CAT scans.

Making Ontario the leader in innovation will also help provide economical and environmental benefits. Some observers believe that the environmental sector has enormous possibilities. We believe that as well, which is why we have created incentives to help companies create environmentally friendly products. One of these incentives is our proposed exemption from the 14.3-cents-per-litre provincial fuel tax for biodiesel fuels, an exciting innovation. We'd like to thank Mr Doug Galt for heading the alternative fuels committee and making that recommendation. Another incentive is the proposed extension of the sales tax rebate for hybrid electric automobiles to cover sports utility vehicles and light trucks equipped with this technology.

The tragedy that occurred in Walkerton two years ago reminds us all that we must not forget the role of research in developing new and safer methods to ensure clean and safe drinking water. Researchers are on the verge of developing an automated water testing system, enabling the immediate detection of biological contamination and immediate notification of those responsible for maintaining that water system.

The province has committed to working with municipalities, researchers and individuals to develop and utilize this innovative technology for the safety and benefit of all Ontarians. That technology can be exported and could be to the benefit and safety of people throughout the world. It is clear that innovation plays an important role in improving the quality of life for all Ontarians through a cleaner environment and also in job creation.

A major driver in making Ontario more innovative is a skilled workforce. Many business leaders have emphasized the importance of skilled workers in order for them to compete globally. One of the key things that can distinguish a jurisdiction for investment is the quality of its workforce. Workers need to access a full range of education and training to continually develop their skills throughout their lifetime.

Ontarians need new skills to use the new technologies found in every workplace today throughout North America. We also face a skills shortage in a major wave of retirement of skilled baby boomers. For example, the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association forecasts a shortfall of about 15,000 tradespeople in Ontario by 2007, largely due to a high retirement rate. During pre-budget consultations, the Ontario Home Builders Association recommended that the government of Ontario partner on outreach activities, expand co-op programs and increase resources for shop facilities in high schools. Their aim was to expand construction trades as a skilled training option for young people.

The 2001 budget already committed \$33 million for 2004-05 to double the number of entrants to apprenticeship

ship programs in the skilled trades from 11,000 in 1998-99 to 22,000 people. This year's budget also addresses the pressing need to meet skills shortages. We're still waiting for the federal government to sign the labour market development agreement, which would allow Ontarians to access almost \$600 million in employment insurance funds for apprenticeship and skills training. It would be nice if the federal government would recognize that and come on board.

Despite this setback, we are committed to improving our training system and expanding the apprenticeship model to new skills areas. This government has modernized our apprenticeship system and increased funding by nearly 50% in the last two years. This budget makes a further investment of \$5 million in 2002-03, rising to \$25 million annually, to further expand apprenticeship and training by 2005-06. This will provide training for 6,000 to 8,000 additional individuals, filling this need for skilled tradesmen in Ontario.

These new investments will support partnerships with employers to mount short- and medium-term skills training in areas most in demand. One initiative provides convenient on-line access to required theoretical training for apprentices in the 16 trades that are most in demand. Other initiatives will bridge those trained outside of Canada into apprenticeship or skilled jobs and help youth who are either unemployed or did not go on to post-secondary education.

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This government continues to recognize the importance of an educated workforce in sparking creativity and innovation. Our 25 colleges of applied arts and technologies bring us skilled workers from campuses in more than 100 Ontario communities. They play an important role in teaching the technical skills for hundreds of occupations in our economy. Colleges need updated equipment in order to meet the needs of employers and changing technologies in the workplace. As technology changes, equipment becomes quickly obsolete.

To help our colleges continue with their quality skills training, we are establishing the college equipment and renewal fund. Over the next five years, the fund will provide \$50 million to colleges to support the acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment and learning resources. As you can see, we are well on our way to building Ontario's future prosperity through innovation.

However, our future prosperity also needs the infrastructure to support it. The government understands that strong cities, towns and communities are vital for our economic prosperity. As a result, the province has implemented comprehensive and far-reaching reforms to the property tax system. We introduced the first new Municipal Act in over a century, which ensures that the legal and financial powers of municipalities will support their modern responsibilities.

This government also launched Smart Growth to promote and manage growth in ways that sustain a strong economy, build strong communities and promote a clean and healthy environment. Guided by Smart Growth

principles, the province will also continue to work in partnership with municipalities.

Through SuperBuild and with our public and private partners, together we will invest at least \$20 billion over five years in Ontario's infrastructure. SuperBuild investments in highways and public transit will significantly increase over the next few years. This will help our environment, resulting in cleaner air and less time spent in traffic for people. This means an improved quality of life and more time for individuals to spend with their families.

Ontario's highways will receive an investment of more than \$1 billion—\$1 billion—in this coming year.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): That's too much. You guys are too much.

Mr Chudleigh: It's not nearly enough. Construction will begin this year on a number of major highway projects in the GTA to address the gridlock and improve safety. More projects, valued at about \$148 million, are planned to upgrade and improve highway safety on GTA highways.

As part of Ontario's Smart Growth strategy, the province is also preparing Ontario's transportation network to support the economic and population growth that's expected over the next 15 years. There will be a new highway connecting with Highway 427, north of Highway 7. We will extend the 404, establishing a Bradford bypass, and Highway 407 east to Highway 35.

We haven't forgotten our highways to the north. Highway construction projects totalling \$255 million are planned for northern highways this year. This includes highway rehabilitation and safety projects and major expansion and four-laning projects on Highways 11, 17 and 69. We believe these infrastructure projects will help boost efficiency in transportation and the economy in the north.

Our rural communities will also receive the necessary funding to upgrade their infrastructure. An additional \$104 million will support municipal road infrastructure, including investments through the connecting links program and the Ontario small town and rural development—OSTAR—and millennium partnerships initiatives. This will also help improve other transportation infrastructure such as necessary ferry repairs and airport upgrades.

Part of our strategy to improve quality of life also includes a transit plan. Our government is moving forward with our 10-year, \$9-billion transit investment plan. We continue to hope that the federal government will be a full transit investment partner with Ontario and its municipalities. However, we must move on, with or without their support. You can't wait for the feds. You could be waiting your entire lifetime.

This year, the province will provide \$193 million in transit assistance through the transit investment plan.

Mr Marchese: Without the federal Liberals.

Mr Chudleigh: Without the federal Liberals.

Mr Marchese: How do you do it?

Mr Chudleigh: We try harder. We have found innovative ways.

This includes GO Transit, inter-regional transit through Golden Horseshoe Transit Investment Partnerships and renewal of municipal transit systems through the transit renewal program.

The government is listening to Ontarians and making key infrastructure investments in people's priorities.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care will increase capital investments in hospitals and the health care system by almost 70%, to a total of \$342 million. Hospitals and other health care providers will be able to continue to modernize, upgrade and expand their infrastructure and services across the province.

Despite these sizable investments, significant infrastructure needs remain, which is why we're increasingly looking at public-private partnerships. P3s—public-private partnerships are referred to as P3s. Governments love acronyms.

P3s are an innovative approach to financing and constructing hospital buildings and the enhanced provisions for non-clinical services. Let me be clear: delivery of health care services will continue to be universally accessible and publicly funded.

As I mentioned earlier, a well-educated workforce is a top priority. We are investing \$69 million in post-secondary education this year. With this funding, in addition to SuperBuild's capital investment of \$1 billion in 1999-2000, universities and colleges will be better able to address enrolment growth and the impact of the double cohort, creating over 73,000 new spaces for double cohort students.

Since the tragedy in Walkerton that occurred two years ago, the government took immediate measures to ensure safe drinking water. We will continue to invest in clean drinking water.

This budget has increased investment for environmental purposes to \$283 million, mainly due to the implementation of Ontario small town and rural development infrastructure projects related to water and sewers. These projects will help our municipalities comply with the new Ontario drinking water protection regulation and make other improvements to their water and waste water systems.

We will also enable the continued renewal and construction of court and jail infrastructure. The expected investment in the justice sector will be \$143 million this year.

Infrastructure investments will make Ontario one of North America's top tourist attractions. We are committed to a revitalized Toronto waterfront that will rival some of the world's most well-known cities that have had recent urban renewals. Toronto will present a viable alternative to Barcelona, Boston, Chicago, London and Sydney.

The city will also offer a cultural alternative due to renewed cultural investments. As announced on May 31, 2002, the government will invest \$119.5 million in seven of Ontario's key cultural facilities. The Royal Ontario Museum will get \$30 million for exhibit and event expansion, while the Art Gallery of Ontario will receive

\$24 million. Other recipients include the Canadian Opera House, the National Ballet School and the Royal Conservatory of Music. Each institution will be able to expand their facilities with this new funding. This will make Ontario one of the top cultural centres in North America.

In conclusion, while being a responsible and accountable government, we must also respond to people's priorities. Making key partnerships in infrastructure investments will help us sustain a growing population and economy and handle short-term needs. Investing in innovation is our long-term vision. It ensures future job growth and economic prosperity for Ontario and all of its people.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further debate?

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Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): It's a pleasure to rise and join in the debate on Bill 109, the Keeping the Promise for Growth and Prosperity Act.

As you know, this legislation would enact the measures announced in the 2002 budget, this government's fourth consecutive balanced budget. I don't believe there is a government in recent memory that has done such a thing as had four consecutive—

Mr Chudleigh: This century. Not in the last century either.

Mr Hardeman: Oh, there we go. Not in two centuries. I'm honoured to be a member of the government that tabled this comprehensive document. As an Ontarian, I'm pleased by the measures contained in this budget because these measures would ensure that Ontario remains on the right track for growth and prosperity. It deals with the issues that are important to the people of Ontario. That's why I believe it's important to say yes to this bill. By saying yes, we'll be saying yes to growth and prosperity in Ontario. Quite simply, a vote in favour of this bill is a vote in favour of Ontario and its people.

Let me explain why. This bill acknowledges Ontario's current fiscal situation. After September 11, we know things are not the way they used to be. Things have changed. It outlines the steps with which we will meet this fiscal challenge. In so doing, we will still deal with the priorities of the people of this province, such as quality health care, quality education, a clean environment and prudent fiscal management. If passed, this bill will ensure that Ontario remains the best place in which to live, work and raise a family.

Ontario got to this enviable position thanks to our government's prudent fiscal management and sound economic policies of the past. Over the years, we did not shrink from making tough decisions and responsible choices. We focused on creating conditions to increase growth and achieve the highest quality of life for the people of Ontario and stuck to our plan.

Since 1995, our government has dramatically reduced the tax burden on people and business. Tax cuts have been broadly based and have played an important role in the province's comprehensive economic policy, which was designed to support and promote job creation, inno-

vation, entrepreneurship, economic growth and prosperity.

Economic growth, spurred by tax cuts, has enabled this government to invest in priority programs and services, such as, as I said, health care, education and our environment. Ontarians of all ages, backgrounds and income levels have benefited from the tax cuts delivered since 1995. Over 893,000 new jobs have been created in the past seven years. Real disposable income has increased by 18.5% in the past seven years. Real disposable income, as I said, has a growth second to none. Tax revenues to pay for programs and services have risen by nearly \$14 billion, and the provincial economy has grown almost 27% since 1995 compared to 20% in the rest of Canada.

Unquestionably, Ontario has enjoyed years of robust growth, record job creation and increasing prosperity. In light of this highly enviable economic situation, the situation in 2001 looks like an anomaly. But it was very real and its effects are lingering. The economy grew by only 1% in 2001, which is a dramatic decrease from the 5.3% growth in the year 2000.

Because Ontario's economy is open and trade-oriented, we were hit particularly hard when our largest trading partner, the United States, experienced an economic slowdown. The tragic events of September 11 dealt a further shock to the global economy through disruptions in economic activity and temporary declines in consumer confidence and spending.

There is no question that the 2001 global economic slowdown hit the province hard, but the effects would have been far more dramatic had it not been for the economic strategy in place in Ontario. The situation would have been worse without the earlier growth in jobs and prosperity and without the tax cuts implemented in previous years.

Clearly, Ontario's economic foundation is sound. The province remains well positioned for future prosperity. In fact, despite the recent slowdown of the global economy and the tragic events of September, Ontario's economy is competitive, inflation and interest rates are low, real disposable incomes are up and consumer and business confidence are high.

Private-sector forecasters, on average, expect the Ontario economy to grow by over 3% in 2002 and 4.3% in 2003. While these projected rates are lower than those Ontario has enjoyed in previous years, they are better than any G7 country over this two-year period. Forecasters have reason to be optimistic. They have seen the growth in Ontario's prosperity over the past seven years. They know the strength of Ontario's economic policies and economic fundamentals. The Keeping the Promise for Growth and Prosperity Act will ensure these fundamentals remain sound.

While Ontario's economy is rebounding sharply, our revenues this year are still reflecting last year's slowdown. The bill recognizes this fact and introduces a number of important measures to ensure we have the revenues we need to provide programs and services important to Ontarians.

I'm sure you are now all aware of our plan, introduced in the 2002 Ontario budget by the Minister of Finance, to delay by one year certain currently scheduled tax cuts. In addition, the next step of the equity in education tax credit would also be delayed. These proposed delays are a prudent response to Ontario's current fiscal economic situation. I'd like to emphasize that we are not cancelling these reductions; we are merely delaying them, and only for one year.

There will be no return to the tax-and-spend days of previous governments in the past, but there is a need to address the fiscal realities of today. There is a need for the measures included in Bill 109, and there is a need to say yes to this bill.

It's important to note that not all previously announced tax cuts are being delayed. Because nearly half of all new jobs are created by small businesses, we will continue the corporate tax rate reductions for small businesses as currently scheduled. Due to the importance of mining to the northern Ontario economy, we will also continue with our planned reductions in the mining tax rate.

To support this government's commitment to the environment, Bill 109 would implement a number of important tax incentives: an extension to the retail sales tax rebate of up to \$1,000 for alternative fuel vehicles to include qualifying electric-hybrid light trucks and sport utility vehicles delivered after June 17, 2002, and a proposed exemption from the 14.3 cents per litre fuel tax on biodiesel fuel.

It's very important to recognize that not only will that be a benefit to our environment and to the consumer buying the fuel, but it will be a great benefit to our agriculture community because the products grown to create the biodiesel will be provided by our hard-working farmers in the province. Lessening our dependence on non-renewable fossil fuels will give us cleaner air and our children a healthier future.

To help people remain in the workforce, our government would remove another 50,000 lower-income people from the income tax rolls through the enrichment of the Ontario tax reduction program: 620,000 additional taxpayers with modest incomes would pay less Ontario income tax. This will bring to 745,000 the number of Ontarians who would not pay any Ontario income tax whatsoever, but they would still pay an estimated \$375 million in federal income tax each year. We believe taking modest-income Ontarians off the tax rolls is the right thing to do, and we encourage our federal counterparts to follow our lead.

As you can see, we are not abandoning our tax cut plan. In fact, a significant factor in the resilience and flexibility of Ontario's economy is this government's focus on cutting taxes. We have shown that cutting taxes invigorates an economy. It gives both entrepreneurs and employees the incentive they need to expand, invest and create jobs.

Cutting personal income tax means more Ontarians can keep more of their hard-earned money. They can use

their money to spend, save or invest. However, the most significant benefits of cutting taxes are long term, in particular after the investment and entrepreneurial climate has had a chance to adjust to the lower tax rate. Tax rates are a fundamental conditioning factor of an economy because they affect the incentives faced by everyone.

The province's long-term goal is unchanged. The proposed one-year delay in implementation will not impair Ontario's tax cut plan. As a result of past cuts, the province's economic foundation is strong and consumer confidence is high. Consumer spending is growing strongly, as indicated by a 2.7% increase in retail sales in the first quarter of 2002.

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Ontario's businesses have already benefited from substantial reductions in corporate income tax rates. Ontario's general combined provincial and federal corporate income tax rate in 2003 would be almost four percentage points below the US Great Lakes states' averages.

Ontario's personal income tax rates would remain tied with those of British Columbia as lowest among provinces for most taxpayers with incomes under \$60,000. And Ontario's top marginal rate would not be affected, remaining at fifth-lowest among the provinces.

Ontario taxpayers will benefit this year from the tax cuts already delivered, and the benefits of those cuts will continue to grow with the economy. By 2004, Ontario's additional 20% personal income tax cut will be delivered. By 2006, Ontario's corporate tax rate cuts will be fully implemented. Once the cuts are fully implemented, Ontario will have the lowest general combined corporate income tax rate of any province or US state.

We have not lost sight of the goal articulated in the 2001 budget, that of making Ontario the highest-performing economy in order to provide the highest quality of life in North America, and we are intent on succeeding. By passing Bill 109, we can ensure that we will succeed.

Ontario is already the number one place in North America to do business. Through our government's commitment to tax cuts, debt reduction, strategic investments in education, innovation and infrastructure, modernizing financial regulations, reducing red tape and eliminating other barriers to growth, there simply is no better place than Ontario to open up shop.

I already mentioned that the Ontario economy is expected to grow by over 3% in 2002, and by over 4% in 2003. Ontario employment is projected to increase by between 1.5% and 2.0% in 2002. In 2003, job creation is expected to register gains between 2.5% and 3.0% as stronger growth in the economy takes hold. Ontario's tax cuts and sound economic and fiscal management have strengthened our province's economic foundation.

For the most part, the slowdown of 2001 is behind us. The measures in Bill 109 would address the impact on revenues carried over from 2001 and make for a brighter, more prosperous tomorrow. I urge all members of the House to vote in favour of keeping the promise for growth and prosperity by voting for the Keeping the Promise for Growth and Prosperity Act.

Thank you very much for allowing me time to speak to the act.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I say to the people watching on television. "Do not adjust your TV set. It's 25 after 7. We'll be finished this in 25 minutes, and then 10 minutes of questions and comments; then you'll have the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, a very well respected member, on prime time at 8 o'clock. For those of you who didn't see the Voice of the Province last night, you'll hear the publisher-author-editor of Treasury Watch give his analysis of the budget right here. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt publishes a well-read forecast of the budget, which was remarkably bang on in its assessments of the Ontario economy, I understand. He brought that in a week before the budget and it was remarkably bang on. I've even seen his publication.

Mr Marchese: How did he get the cake then?

Hon Mr Baird: I didn't see the cake. I didn't get invited to partake in the cake. I don't know whether the member for Scarborough-Agincourt could have his cake and eat it too. Maybe he still has some left over. Maybe he'll invite us all up to his office to help eat his hat later.

I've even seen his Treasury Watch publication quoted as an independent source of financial advice in the Toronto Star on one occasion. I thought that was the ultimate compliment to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who is very well respected on all sides of this House, not just for his knowledge on financial issues but for his integrity.

I also hope that maybe later on we'll hear from the member for Trinity-Spadina, the hard-working member who forcefully fights for his constituents as well. It would be a real treat if we could get the member for Nickel Belt to split her time with him and we would hear from them both. But for the time being you'll hear from me.

I'm pleased to have the chance to rise on the budget bill, which comes out of the budget delivered in this place by the Minister of Finance, Janet Ecker—a good budget. I worked in Ottawa for nine years as a student and then full-time. In the nine years I was there, we never had a balanced budget, let alone having the fourth balanced budget, when any single excuse in the book could have been used not to balance the budget. But Janet Ecker delivered a Conservative document that delivers on our commitment to bring in a balanced budget, which is exciting.

We love the education funding announcement in the budget. I think it's \$500 million of increased spending. I know my NDP friends were happy with that too when Janet Ecker presented the budget.

I love the tax cuts contained in the budget. Building on the 192 tax cuts that have already been brought in by the Harris government and the last Treasurer, Jim Flaherty and before that, Ernie Eves, there are four more tax cuts. The only thing we're debating about tax cuts is, are the last four or five tax cuts going to take place six months from now or 18 months from now? It's remarkable: the

people who have stood up and fought every single tax cut in this place are now disappointed that we're not cutting taxes fast enough, which is a surprise to me.

I was pleased with the budget. The budget wouldn't have been the budget that each of us as individuals, 103 members, would have written, but on balance, in difficult circumstances, it was an excellent document of which the minister can be proud.

In my community we have the telecommunications industry which has gone through a restructuring, I'll say, as has the automotive industry in the province. I think of the two biggest employers in my riding, JDS Uniphase and Northern Telecom, Nortel, which have gone through some difficult periods, and that obviously is reflected with the revenues we bring in. I strongly support the corporate tax cut. It has already begun.

I was pleased about the tax cut for small business, not just the previous small business tax cuts, but there will be more coming in a number months and there are more corporate tax cuts to help boost the economy in a number of months beyond that, in a balanced approach.

The agriculture industry is also an important employer in my riding. We have a great Minister of Agriculture. Finally, today we're on the road to getting Bill 81, the Nutrient Management Act, passed under the capable leadership of Helen Johns, the new Minister of Agriculture. I know Brian Coburn worked very hard on that, as did Ernie Hardeman, the member who spoke before me. Doug Galt and Toby Barrett also worked very hard on that issue. That's important too.

I was also pleased that the budget Janet Ecker presented included—and this is something that didn't get a lot of attention—increased funding to help those people in Ontario with a developmental disability. Last year the previous Treasurer, Jim Flaherty, brought in some budget initiatives, at my urging and at the urging of so many members in this place on both sides of the House, additional funding to support people with a developmental disability. They committed \$55 million, growing to \$197 million. Some people said, "We won't see any more of that," and Janet Ecker delivered, with \$49 million of new operational funding and, as was reported here earlier, more than \$15 million in capital funding to help construct places to live.

Today we had Community Living Day, where associations for community living from across Ontario spoke to all members of the Legislature. They visited the Legislature. We had statements. I was pleased, along with a good number of ministers and members from all sides of the House, to have a chance to meet with representatives for community living. The Toronto Association for Community Living, Agnes Samler, was there. She's the executive director. She does a phenomenal job as a leader in this area, as does Cay Snedden, someone who has been a real inspiration to me. She is a mother of a son with a developmental disability who, when I was Minister of Social Services, would take me to see her son's group home, who would take me to see her son's day program. She is someone who taught me an awful lot and

continues to help spread that wisdom with the member for Scarborough Centre. She was here today to talk to members and to help put the issue of community living and people with developmental disabilities on the radar screen.

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Some people have a voice, a strong voice. If they're a teachers' union leader or a chamber of commerce or industry executive, they have a powerful voice to be heard in this province. But some people don't have as loud a voice as others. I was pleased that we had the opportunity to meet with the community living representatives and talk with a number of self-advocates who were here to make their case and talk about the things that are important to them. They talked about the issue of aging parents: a terrific number of people who made community living a reality; people who fought to change attitudes back in the 1940s and 1950s; people whose doctor might have said, when the baby was born with Down syndrome, to simply send the child to an orphanage; people who not only changed attitudes but fought to make special education a reality in our schools, fought to change attitudes, fought to close institutions and fought to make it accessible.

That is terrific, and I was pleased that the budget contained a substantial increase, a record increase, to support people with developmental disabilities. In 1999 we had a \$35-million increase, in 2000 we had a \$50-million increase, last year we had a \$55-million increase and this year we had a more than \$60-million increase to support developmental disabilities. Now, that's not going to get a lot of public attention, but I know that all members in this place, from all political parties, strongly support it.

But those senior aging parents who made community living a reality now need support. They're at a time in their lives when they're not sure what they will do, next week or next month or next year, when they're unable to provide care and support for their loved ones. That's why the budget contained a lot of important measures to help provide some further assurances that care will be there for those individuals when their parents are no longer able to provide it.

There were representatives here from the Ontario Association for Community Living: Keith Powell, the executive director, who does a terrific job, as does David Barber, who's been president of the association for three years now. I was pleased that the Minister of Education and Deputy Premier was at the event. I was very pleased that Janet Ecker, the former Minister of Social Services and now treasurer, was at the event to give these voices an opportunity to be heard by decision-makers. That was important.

Back in my community, I can tell you the budget was welcome news for groups like Ottawa-Carleton Lifeskills, where people like Cathy Wood and Arthur Emmet and so many people work to make community living a reality, as it was with the Tamir Foundation, an organization founded by the Jewish community, which does a

phenomenal job in Ottawa. They do a great job. The Jewish community has taken this organization under its wing, and they have a large group home contained right on the Ottawa Jewish community centre campus. It's near the Jewish community centre, where they have recreational facilities that the folks whom Tamir serves can use. They can use the long-term-care centre. The synagogue, the temple, is right across. They can benefit from the volunteer support of the Hillel Academy, which is located just a block from the main group home. It really is a perfect example of that community taking this organization, which serves Jewish and non-Jewish adults alike with developmental disabilities. The community has really come forward. They receive some unprecedented support, and the government is there to match that support in the budget, which I think is welcome news.

Also, the Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities is a pretty important group in my community. Dave Ferguson there has tried to address some really significant challenges financially on a good number of issues. New financial support, while not enough, has certainly gone a long way to helping the need. We've got to do more to address the needs of the workers in this sector.

I'm going to surprise you: I'll say to my friend Rosario Marchese that I met this afternoon in the hall, and had a good discussion with, my good friend Sid Ryan about the important need of workers—

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Did you talk about drug testing?

Hon Mr Baird: Sid Ryan certainly was very supportive of drug testing opposition, brought forward by the NDP.

I had a talk with Sid about the importance—that we've got to do more to recognize the workers in this sector. The turnover is very high. It's not a sexy job. It's not really a job for many of these folks; it's a vocation. It's an area where these people bring a lot of love, skill and devotion: the Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Ottawa-Carleton Lifeskills, the Toronto Association for Community Living, organizations like Reena—I know the member for Thornhill has been a big booster of Reena and Sandy Keshen, the group there. I was pleased to attend a fundraiser for the new elderhome for Reena just the other night here in the city of Toronto. They do a phenomenal job.

The amount of support you see for these agencies for developmental disabilities, like Reena and Tamir, is really phenomenal, and they're a great example of how other parts of the community have to do more to respond to these important needs. But Reena is certainly an impressive organization.

I was also pleased that the budget talked about the importance of property taxation, to follow up some of the work done by the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Marcel Beaubien—the urgent need, certainly in my community and in small places in my constituency like Richmond, Greely, Osgoode, Metcalfe, Vernon, Burritts

Rapids, North Gower and Ashton. There is a need—and the minister spoke of that in the budget—to look at property taxation issues.

I'm really arguing strongly that we've got to do more to perhaps set a small-rural business subclass within that to allow municipalities to try to respond to some of the needs. Take a funeral home in Osgoode, the former Osgoode township. The taxation levels it possesses versus one in downtown Ottawa can be tremendous. I think of the Richmond mall: some of the rent there couldn't even cover the property taxes, let alone a return on investment. If we want to maintain the well-being and economic health of our rural communities, we've got to look at issues like that.

I was pleased that in the budget speech the Minister of Finance, Janet Ecker, made reference to that, because that is a huge issue for small business people in my constituency. Despite some of the contents of the budget, the minister felt strongly about continuing the corporate tax cuts for small business. In my community, small business is big business. It creates a lot of jobs and a lot of entrepreneurial spirit, and the budget helps promote some of those important initiatives.

There was a lot of attention focused in the budget on education, and the budget bill obviously follows through on some of this. They've been able to move forward with a lot of new school construction of late. The Catholic board has responded tremendously well to that in my community. We have a new elementary school for the Catholic board in Stittsville, two in south Nepean and a number in Kanata. But it is important that the public board begin to make some of the difficult but necessary decisions that the Catholic board has been making for a good number of years, going back to its days as the former Carleton Catholic school board.

The two francophone boards are opening schools. We have a new elementary school, Pierre Elliott Trudeau school, in south Nepean in my riding. We have a new francophone high school that was transferred and is now in Bells Corners in my constituency. That's welcome news.

But there is an urgent need for a new elementary school in Stittsville. That's something about which I have spoken on a good number of occasions to both the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance, about what we can do to leverage the Ottawa board to recognize that they have an important responsibility to balance urban and suburban needs. It can't be all one way, and I feel it has been in this board. That's coming to a head, and I'm certainly making some strong recommendations that action is needed for these children, these parents, these families and these communities, particularly in growing suburban areas like Stittsville and south Nepean. It is tremendously important.

As part of this bill, with respect to tax cuts, the provincial government doesn't tax literally hundreds of thousands of people on the lower and modest income levels, and this budget takes another 50,000 taxpayer right off the tax system. My colleagues opposite cou-

maybe talk to their Liberal colleagues and maybe they would do what Paul Martin wouldn't do. Maybe John Manley would be open to helping these 750,000-odd taxpayers—50,000 more of them now, thanks to Janet Ecker—who pay no provincial income tax but pay more than \$350 million, \$375 million in federal income tax. Instead of squeezing some money out of them and then sending it back to them, just don't squeeze them in the first place. Those kinds of tax cuts are important to ensure that low- and modest-income families get it.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): What about the child tax credit?

Hon Mr Baird: The child tax credit isn't clawed back; it's the other one. There are two of them. That's not clawed back.

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Mr Agostino: You claw back the other one too.

Hon Mr Baird: No, that one isn't clawed back. It's the other one that's clawed back.

I believe Jean Chrétien's federal Liberal government, when they came forward with the national child benefit supplement, said provinces are entitled to claw back. I'm pleased the federal Liberals, including Allan Rock, the member opposite's good friend—he votes every year to allow us to do that. That's the way Jean Chrétien runs things up there in Ottawa.

If they have an issue with that, I know that will be something they'll want to take to their federal Liberal cousins, because I suppose they voted for these Liberal members. These Liberal members did that, so I can essentially say these Liberal members voted for it.

I was reading in the paper today that a lot of Ontario caucus members in the Liberal government aren't so happy with the current Prime Minister and are perhaps looking for some changes.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Have you met Jim Flaherty?

Hon Mr Baird: I know Jim Flaherty's doing a tremendous job as Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. He's doing a great job. No one was cheering louder for the budget than the two men sitting beside the Minister of Finance, Premier Ernie Eves and the Minister of Enterprise, Jim Flaherty, at the initiatives contained—very, very exciting.

Mr Agostino: Have you been to dinner at Bigliardi's?

Hon Mr Baird: I haven't been to dinner at Bigliardi's lately. I know my colleague probably goes to Bigliardi's a lot more. One of my colleagues over here represents Bigliardi's in his constituency. He represents Bigliardi's, and my other colleague from the NDP represents all the big bank towers.

Mr Smitherman: No, I do.

Hon Mr Baird: Oh, sorry. The Liberal member for Rosedale represents the big bank towers. He represents Bay Street literally. One of the members opposite, I think, even lives on Bay Street.

This budget contains a lot of good economic news. Does it go as far as anyone would like on their pet projects? No. Does a budget ever do that? No. But the

bottom line is, it's a balanced budget. The bottom line is, it continues tax cuts. The bottom line is, it meets demands in health care.

The Ontario government knows that all Ontarians see universally accessible health care as an important priority. Since taking office, the province's health care operating spending has increased from just \$17.6 billion to this year's planned \$25.5 billion. I know it's a great source of consternation to my friends in the Liberal Party that Brian Mulroney used to pay for about 18% of Ontario's health care budget and now Chrétien only spends 14% of our health care spending. What are they doing with the money? They're sending it all to Human Resources Development Canada, Groupe d'action and all these wasteful spending projects.

Health care is the number one priority of Ontarians. The Ontario government knows that Janet Ecker and Ernie Eves know that because they put their money where their mouth is. Action speaks louder than words from our friends across the border.

We promised tax cuts. The budget delivers tax cuts. Four of them now, and five of them instead of being in six months, in 18 months. But these guys voted against every single tax cut that was brought in. They disagree with tax cuts. I've seen the member for High Park quoted that they would want to roll back some of the tax cuts. He then became very quiet. So that was very interesting.

I think one of the members opposite even lives on Bay Street. When he talks about my Bay Street friends, I wonder who he's talking about. I don't know that many people who live on Bay Street and I'm looking at one of them now.

I'm thrilled to support this budget. I think it meets a lot of urgent needs in protecting our drinking water. There's \$500 million to support that important initiative. It meets important needs in health care. I go out and talk to families in my riding, whether they're in Barrhaven or south Nepean, Stittsville or in the rural part. It's going to make our health care system a little better. It's going to add a little bit of support to education. It's going to provide a little bit of hope for the future for families, senior parents, aging parents with developmentally disabled children. I think that's good news.

Mr Agostino: How much money did you put into home care?

Hon Mr Baird: Home care is going over very well. Graham Bird has just taken over as the chairman of the local community care access centre and he's doing a tremendously good job. We're thrilled he's agreed to serve his community by taking on that role. The hospitals are getting kind of jealous of the CCACs because the CCACs over the years have gotten such a big increase. So that's good news.

I am pleased, though, to be working here at the Legislature with hard-working ushers like Yolanda Gray, Claudia Da Mota, Yvonne Palkowski, Jesse Kulendran, Walter Yee, Trevor Day and Phillip DeSouza, who are all working very hard for all members of the Legislature. We should at times take a moment to thank and

congratulate them for their hard work and make sure their contribution is noted in the record.

I'm looking forward to the speeches by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who always gives an informed speech, and from the member for Trinity-Spadina.

With that, I will allow questions and comments. I know my colleague the member for Halton will want to respond.

The Speaker: Questions and comments.

Mr Smitherman: Well, holy moly, it's amazing around here what a week can do. For anyone who's listening or had a chance to watch from home, the guy who just sat down, the member from Nepean-Carleton, till a week ago, before his defanging and declawing was complete, was one of the most rabid right wingers known to our entire country. In the turn of a short week this leopard has sought to change his spots, but I am so confident that Ontario's taxpayers, Ontario's voters, will not be fooled by this attempt on the part of the Harris-Eves band on the other side of the House to change their spots.

It's kind of cool to watch this band that for seven long years has gone on with these rapacious attacks on the poorest folks in our society all of a sudden to change their tone. I don't know if you've had a chance to watch the finance minister and even the minister—he's barely a minister—who just spoke. They've even changed their speaking style. They're speaking more softly, trying to conjure up the imagery of being caring and compassionate.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Not all of us.

Mr Smitherman: I see the member Mr Guzzo is here for three days in a row. Terrific.

I would say to anyone who's watching from home, be very conscious of this debate. Listen to the next presentation that will come from my party, from a man who is ready to serve in a senior capacity and who will not spend his time playing this unprincipled game, jumping back and forth, pretending to be something they are not.

This government has in the space of a week attempted to convince people that they are something that they are not. But I trust the Ontario voters. I think they're smarter than these guys across the way.

Mr Marchese: I want to welcome the citizens to this political forum. I want to say that around 9 o'clock, more or less, I'll be on for a half-hour. I want to save all my energy—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: —just in case you're tuning in around 9 o'clock, more or less. I'll have an opportunity to respond to the members from Oxford, Nepean-Carleton and Halton.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I just want to congratulate my colleagues from Halton, Oxford and Nepean-Carleton for what I thought were insightful presentations. I have to say that it's a little

nasty in the House here tonight and we're going to have to take some decorum lessons.

I want to welcome my colleague Gary Guzzo back. He was not feeling well for a period of time and we're happy to see him back in the House, as opposed to the cheap shots that are coming from the member from Rosedale. I'd also like to say that I'm always proud to represent the agricultural community, and if the member opposite thinks I'm full of nutrients, then that's his problem.

I always learn a lot from the member from Nepean-Carleton. I know that as the previous Comsoc minister, as it was known then, he made a great difference to people with disabilities in Ontario. He had quite a commitment to that. I think that as time progresses and we get away from all of this nastiness that's going on in the House, we'll recognize him for the work he did there. It was a great opportunity. He took an interest in a specific area. That's what all of us should do, when we have a ministry: find areas that we're interested in and work with them to be able to make differences.

Today the member for Oxford spoke, and that this should be a very exciting day for him. Nutrient management passed a little earlier, and of course he was the brains of the operation for getting that into the House. That also is an accomplishment for him. He should be very proud of himself.

And of course we always say wonderful things about the member from Halton.

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Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): He has good apples.

Hon Mrs Johns: He has good apples. Thank you. That's the nicest thing I've heard today.

He spoke well about the wonderful things that he believes are happening in this budget.

Thank you very much. Everybody have a lovely evening.

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I just want to comment to the member from Nepean-Carleton, who was talking about Mr Flaherty, the minister of what I call the E-I-E-I-O ministry. I just want you to know that when I appeared at estimates with the previous Minister of Economic Development and Trade, the member for Leeds-Grenville, he spoke for a half-hour from a text that was prepared by his ministry and never once mentioned the automotive sector. When I stood up in my rebuttal, said to him, "Did you forget that the engine that drives the economy of Ontario is the automotive sector?" He said, "Oh, we sort of overlooked it." Now, suddenly they're making this great virtue of the fact that they're having meetings. They're meeting with the automotive sector. Today they announced that they're going to do more studies; they're going to be looking at things.

The automotive sector has been here for a long time. When I was the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, we had an automotive advisory committee that was headed up by Ken Harrigan, the president of the Ford Motor Co. It was a very, very vibrant situation. What do we have? We have this government total-

ignoring the automotive sector, playing catch-up, not realizing the importance of this particular issue.

The last thing I want to talk about is that I noticed the Premier is constantly talking about bringing the discipline of the private sector to everything, bring the discipline of the private sector to the marketplace. You mentioned Nortel in your riding. Is that going to be your model for this private sector discipline? Are you going to try Enron? Are you going to try BCE, where they wrote down \$7 billion to \$9 billion on Teleglobe? I would suggest to you that what we have to do is bring discipline. It doesn't have to be the private sector; it doesn't have to be the market. Bring discipline. All you have to do is take a look at British Energy. They sort of privatized it with the same people. They just said, "Go and do it. We'll give you your marching orders. Do it." So that is something I think this government should be looking at, and stop using the private sector discipline as their model. If you take a look at the covers of Business Week or of the Economist, everybody is trashing the private sector for their excesses. All you have to do is look at Hydro One.

The Speaker: Response?

Mr Chudleigh: I thank the members I shared my time with, the member from Oxford and the member from Nepean-Carleton.

The member from Nepean-Carleton forgot, during his speech—he was so caught up in the subject—to recognize the great work of Lisa Pearson, in the whip's office. She has done yeoman's service for the whip and indeed for this caucus for this entire term.

I also appreciate the opinions that were expressed by the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, the member for Trinity-Spadina and the former minister from York Centre. They all expressed wonderful opinions about the budget, but we also have some other people who have expressed opinions on the budget. One is Dr Elliot Halperin, from the Ontario Medical Association. He said, "Everybody understands that there is a crisis of sustainability in the health care system, and I think the government has recognized that it is very important for our patients that they get that timely access to high-quality care." The medical system seems to think we're doing the right thing.

Also, no one less than Mordechai Rozanski, the chair of the Council of Ontario Universities, made this comment on the budget: "This budget makes the increased cohort a budget priority of this government and will ensure we"—the universities of Ontario—"can accommodate the larger number of students."

Further, another opinion on the budget: Jennifer Lewington, a columnist for the Globe and Mail—whose parents, I might add, live in wonderful downtown Milton, in the marvellous region of Halton, one of the prettiest ridings in all of Ontario—says, "University spokesmen had high praise for yesterday's Ontario budget.... 'We are pleased that we received the full grant funding that we had requested' said ... the chairman of the Council of Ontario Universities. He said the extra money (about \$82

million for universities) means that the increased number of students who wish to attend 'will have a place in our universities.'"

The Speaker: Further debate? The member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I want to indicate I'll be sharing my time with the members from Windsor West and Eglinton-Lawrence.

I want to begin the debate on Bill 109, which is the budget bill, starting with the section dealing with the Taxpayer Protection Act. You will recall that the Eves-Harris government told the people of Ontario there was a Taxpayer Protection Act that would protect them against government making changes in taxes, and it made it clear that it was against the Taxpayer Protection Act to postpone a tax cut that was in legislation. I think the people of Ontario believed that.

There was some bantering earlier in the evening about my having to eat my hat. Well, it's true. Last Saturday night I was on a program called Focus Ontario and the interviewer said to me, "Do you think there's any way they would delay the tax cuts?" And I said, "No. They promised them. They actually passed all of the legislation enacting the tax cuts and, furthermore, there's this Taxpayer Protection Act that would make it illegal to do that. The only way they could do it would be to run a referendum." I said, "I'll eat my hat if they do that."

Well, I was wrong. As a matter of fact, on Monday here in the Legislature the Premier sent me over a cake hat to eat. I thought it was unusual because I was saying to the people of Ontario, "Listen, if there's one thing I think they'll do that you can count on their doing it's actually going through with the tax cuts." The reason I'm wrong is because they broke that fundamental promise; they are not proceeding with major tax cuts January 1, 2003. Frankly, I was totally surprised in the budget.

We asked the government, "How can you possibly do that? There's a law on the books that prohibits you from doing that." They said, "We're going to pass a technical amendment"—that's the term they used—"that will allow us to not have to follow the law." So in my opinion the law is not worth the paper it's written on because it can be changed at a moment's notice with any government simply passing a technical amendment.

The government says, "We're into a difficult time because of 9/11." That's simply not the case. The law says if revenues drop by 5%, you can bypass the law. Revenues in the province of Ontario have dropped by perhaps 1% and you can trace it directly to two things. One is a drop in something called the local services revenue, where the province used to get money from the municipalities for doing services. The municipalities have taken over the services and the money no longer comes in. The second area is the drop in revenue from Hydro One and OPG. As a matter of fact, if you look at the budget you'll see housing starts last year—2001, when 9/11 occurred, as we all know—were up dramatically. Car sales were up dramatically throughout the year. The economy actually in the last quarter of 2001 was exceptionally strong, stronger than before 9/11.

So I say to the people of Ontario, the Taxpayer Protection Act that every Conservative member of the Legislature proudly signed before the election—I think it was one of the things that got them elected—is not worth the paper it's written on. It can be changed with just a technical amendment, and that's what we have in this bill. Essentially it says the tax cuts that were legislated, due to come in January 1, 2003, are now delayed for a year.

I understand why they're doing it. I think they have got us into a fiscal mess because of their fiscal policies, but it was not us that promised that. As a matter of fact, we probably lost the election because Mr Harris and Mr Eves said, "Elect us and we will cut your personal income taxes by 20% during the next term," and also cut residential education property tax by 20%. This particular piece of legislation delays that to January 1, 2004.

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Mr Bradley: That's a big retreat.

Mr Phillips: Are we now not going to see an election till 2004? Is that what all this means, "within the term"?

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: Mr Guzzo, you will have a chance to talk on the budget bill later.

Mr Guzzo: No, I won't.

Mr Phillips: Well, unfortunately, your caucus may not give you a chance but I think the people of Ontario would appreciate that each member who is up to speak has an opportunity to express their view, regardless of how you may feel about it.

The Taxpayer Protection Act is not worth the paper it's written on, and I think that's an enormous broken promise by the government. I would say to the people of Ontario, who were promised \$1 billion in cuts in personal income tax effective January 1, 2003—that was what was going to happen—now that will not happen. So what we will be voting on when we vote on this budget bill is for a \$1-billion increase in personal income taxes.

We have said all along that we think it's a huge mistake to have corporate taxes 25% lower in Ontario than in our neighbouring jurisdictions, for this reason: we forgo corporate income tax revenue in the province of Ontario of about \$2.2 billion to get corporate taxes 25% below the US. The federal government, by the way, is participating in this and they forgo revenue of about \$1.8 billion. So we get about \$4 billion less revenue. That's what it costs in forgone revenue because we have now adopted a policy of corporate taxes 25% below the US. I think that is foolish long-term economic policy.

The automotive sector, which my colleague Mr Kwinter is acutely aware of, tells us that it costs them \$2,500 per employee less money in Ontario than it does in Michigan and other US states because of health costs. Health costs are \$2,500 per employee less here in Ontario than they are in neighbouring jurisdictions. Why is that? It is because we have chosen in this province and in this country to operate our health care in a certain way, where we collectively agree we will pay taxes and we will collectively provide all of us with a health insurance plan.

If we go for corporate taxes 25% below the US, with forgone revenue of \$4 billion, in our opinion health care is unsustainable with that over the long haul. We think a far wiser long-term economic policy is to say, "Listen, we're going to have corporate taxes competitive with the US. We're not going to be beaten on that front, but we're going to make sure that we invest in the things that will give us long-term economic stability: a quality workforce through education and training, a quality health care system and a quality environment.

The bill that we're dealing with here in my opinion is essentially making the Taxpayer Protection Act worthless. This government or any other government can simply say, "All right, sure, that's what the law says, but we're going to introduce a piece of legislation to simply change the law." I find that that particular piece of this bill, as the public begins to increasingly recognize, severely undermines the credibility of the Ontario government. It's like, "You said there was this law that would prevent this from happening. How can it be with simply a technical amendment you can change it?"

I guarantee you the analysis that says, "Well, 9/11 made us do it," will not stand up to any scrutiny. In fact, if you look at the economic numbers, the economy has performed better over the four years than the Conservative Party assumed when they put their election platform together. So they can't argue, "Things have gone worse than we thought." The economy has performed better, and yet they still have now determined they cannot deliver on the 20% cut in personal income taxes within the term and the 20% cut in residential education property tax.

As I say, taxes will have to rise about \$1 billion next year over what had been legislated on the personal income tax front. I might also add that in the prebudget hearings, Minister Flaherty, then Minister of Finance, came to our committee, and we asked him, "Can we count on the cut in residential education property tax proceeding?" He said, "Yes. By the end of 2003 it will be finished—complete." Again, because the member from Nepean was mentioning education property taxes, I'd add that \$250 million was promised to be cut out of residential education property taxes in 2003. That's now delayed for a year, to 2004, which by all accounts will be when the next election starts.

The platform they ran on, "Taxpayer Protection Act guaranteed," has changed here. "We will complete a 20% cut in personal income tax," is delayed now until January 1, 2004. The government may be waiting until 2004 to call the election, but that would be a surprise.

I would urge the people of Ontario to recognize what's happening on the—

Mr Chudleigh: Will you eat your hat? Do you want another hat?

Mr Phillips: Mr Chudleigh says, "Eat my hat. Listen, that's up to you. The reason I had to eat my hat was because I assumed the government actually would follow the law they had. I never thought they'd break the law. They passed the taxpayer protection law, which

thought would guarantee they had to go ahead with the tax cuts, but, no, it's all off. It's delayed for a year. "Sorry, we're going to pass a technical amendment."

I said in the House the other day that I'll never make the mistake again of believing the government. I won't put myself out on a limb by saying, "Yes, the government will do what they promised." I've learned my lesson. I advise the backbench members particularly, don't get yourselves out on a limb promising that Ernie Eves will do what he says he will do or you'll eat your hat, because he may send you a hat too. I said that in the House the other day.

Second, I want to talk about the books of the province. It was in 1995, I remember, when Mr Eves had just become the finance minister, that he proudly said, "The two sets of books are gone." This was 1995, seven years ago. It was in the fiscal statement in big, bold type. Well, here we are, and do you know what this budget bill is designed to do? Finally, on April 1, 2003, about 10 months from now, they're going to move to one set of books in the province. That's eight years after Mr Eves promised it. For a government that likes to say, "We like to apply private sector discipline" and whatnot—if any private sector company tried to get away with running two sets of books, like some private sector companies are, as my colleague Mr Kwinter said, they would be up before the courts or before the SEC.

Mr Guzzo: How many did Nixon have?

Mr Phillips: Well, Mr Guzzo, just listen. I'll get to this for you. You'll probably appreciate it.

We still have the two sets of books. The public should be aware that we had a budget presented on Monday, and then there were estimates presented. For people watching, estimates give ministries the legal authority to spend. In the Ministry of Health, I think there was a \$600-million difference between the budget and estimates; in the Ministry of Education, I think it was \$600 million; in Management Board it was \$500 million.

We have these two sets of books. The auditor, as recently as June 7—because we've been concerned about it, as he has—said the accounts are still prepared and presented on two different bases: "I believe this can only contribute to public confusion with respect to annual expenditures and financial results." He's been urging the government to do away with these two sets of books.

Again, this is finally in this bill. It was in November 1995 that Mr Eves promised this, and here we are now, seven years later, and it will be eight years later before we move to one set of books. I might add that I think the public are owed a far more transparent look at the finances. Every other province, by the way, had their budgets presented months ago.

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Hon Mrs Johns: Did they have a leadership race too?

Mr Phillips: Well, it was Mr Eves who also promised that budgets would be presented before the fiscal year starts. One of my colleagues over there said, "Well, leadership." I'd say that, yes, your party has the right to a leadership race, obviously, totally, but it also has the

obligation to run the province at the same time. If you believed in 1995 that the budget should be presented before the fiscal year started, you shouldn't wait until eight years go by. Again, we have a promise that next year we'll get the budget before the fiscal year starts.

By the way, another part of this transparency is that there is a substantial amount of what I call off-book debt building up, with the province responsible for it but on somebody else's books. I'll give you an example. The school boards now have added well over \$2 billion of new debt to build schools. It used to be that the province handled the financing of that. But they've said, "No. School boards, you go out and borrow the money and we'll guarantee to pay the principal and interest on it."

Well, there are two problems with that. One is that that debt is totally the responsibility of the province but it's hidden off the books. The second problem with that is that we are paying at least 25 basis points more to borrow that money for the school boards than we would here. So it's costing us, just in that particular case, a minimum of \$5 million a year in extra money the taxpayers are spending, for no benefit. There is no benefit, none at all. It's just that it's hidden off the books.

Frankly, the same thing's happening with nursing homes. It used to be that the province helped provide funding for nursing homes. Now they say, "No. You go out and borrow the money and we'll pay you \$10 per day per individual." My hope is that we will get a much more transparent look at the books.

I might add as an aside on this budget bill—I call it the "Flaherty hostage bill"—that they've thrown into this bill the Durham university. It's in another bill before the House too, so we've got the Durham university in two different bills. But it's thrown in here. It's going to put Mr Flaherty in an interesting position. He's going to have to vote to essentially abandon the Taxpayer Protection Act and increase personal income taxes by a billion dollars because the Durham university is in here. As I say, I found it rather odd that thrown into the budget bill, normally dealing with the budget, is the Durham university, and it's in another bill that's before the House right now.

The sale of assets is in the bill as well. If you look at the budget, you will see the revenue line called Sales and Rentals. In 1998-99, it was \$640 million. Then it went up to \$2.1 billion. What was that? That was the sale of 407. That's where, on May 5, 1999, the 407 was sold and \$1.6 billion profit was put on the books. May 5, 1999, was the day the election was called too.

I might add that people who use the 407 have been taken to the cleaners. The owners of that have seen the value of their investment quadruple. They put an equity investment in there of \$750 million three years ago; it's now worth \$3 billion. It's quadrupled. It's gone up four times the value of their equity position. Why is that? Because it's the only private toll road in the world where they can take tolls up without limit. They're clamouring to invest in this because they can take tolls up without limit. If you look at the investors, in their annual reports

they brag about it. They've made a great investment. The reason I raise that is when Mr Eves sold it—and it was Mr Eves who made the deal—he said, "We've got a unique tolling agreement here that will protect the 407 users. Tolls can go up no more than three cents a kilometre after 15 years." Well, I'll tell you, in many cases tolls have gone from four cents a kilometre to 11.5 cents a kilometre in three years. There's no protection for the users of the 407.

Then we see again, as we approach this election, sales and rentals for 2001, \$637 million, \$586 million—wooh, \$2.4 billion for 2002. So here we are. We're seeing the 407 all over again. Sales and rentals: we asked the officials on budget day, "What is that? It's gone up \$1.8 billion." Mr Lindsay, a very knowledgeable person, said, "Well, there's POSO in there probably." That's the provincial savings office. "For how much?" "Well, \$20 million to \$100 million." "But where's the big money? Where's that \$1.8 billion?" And he acknowledged, "It's Hydro One."

Where did the idea to sell Hydro One come from? We all remember there was no plan to sell Hydro One. That was never on the books. Anybody who had looked at it said we wouldn't sell Hydro One—until December, and then Mr Harris came out of the blue and said, "We're going to sell Hydro One." Where did that come from?

Mr John Snobelen (Mississauga West): Nonsense.

Mr Phillips: He says, "Nonsense," but if you had planned to sell Hydro One I sure would have liked to have known about that, and so would a lot of other people in dealing with the Legislature. It came out of the blue, and it's clear now why it came out of the blue. It's kind of the 407 equivalent. It's the government looking for a quick cash infusion to deal with a financial problem leading up to an election. There's no question about that, in my opinion. So we see, as I say, that very substantial increase in the sale of assets in the budget document.

Perhaps the major part of this particular budget bill is the decision to delay these very substantial tax cuts. It's ironic, because, as I said earlier, when we vote on this bill next week, essentially the government will be voting to take personal income taxes up by about a billion dollars over what they had promised and what's in the legislation. I can remember many arguments here from the government saying, "Tax cuts pay for themselves. The more we cut, the faster the revenue comes in." I remember that argument. But suddenly they changed the tune and said, "No, we have a financial problem here. We're going to have to delay the tax cuts because we need the revenue." Well, you can't have it both ways.

Mr Guzzo: What does the record show?

Mr Phillips: There's Mr Guzzo again: what does the record show? I will assume that the government believes what it says. The government's saying, "We've got a short-term problem with revenue here in the province of Ontario so we're going to have to delay the tax cuts. We need the revenue." Well, you can't have it both ways. For several years they argued, "This is like a perpetual money-generating machine. If we cut the taxes, it increases revenue."

As the people of the province listen to this debate, they should reflect back to the last campaign, which the Conservatives won and we lost. Why did that happen? They promised the Taxpayer Protection Act that would guarantee that they couldn't delay tax cuts, that it's a matter of the law. Yet with the stroke of a pen, this bill—and by the way, make no mistake, this bill will be rammed through within the next few days, and the government will hope there's as little debate as possible. They've added other little pieces in the bill, the Durham University, which all of us support, so, "If you don't get this bill through you're holding up Durham University." That'll certainly keep Mr Flaherty onside. But firstly, it will fundamentally and forever essentially make the Taxpayer Protection Act useless, because who will believe the government when they say we've got this Taxpayer Protection Act, and when, at the first sign of any particular issue, they decide to introduce a technical amendment?

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In the last election, the people of Ontario were promised this 20% personal income tax cut by the government. We didn't think that fiscally, financially it was sustainable and, sure enough, events have proven us right. The government itself has now acknowledged they're going to have to delay it until after the next election.

On the residential education property tax, it was just two and a half months ago, well after 9/11, I might add, well after all of the impact—whatever that impact was—that Mr Flaherty told the province publicly that the government was proceeding with it.

So I go back to what the rationale for the delay is, and it's, "Well, we ran into difficulties on 9/11." But recognize this: the economy performed better in Ontario in the three months after 9/11 than it did in the six months leading up to that. The revenue in the province of Ontario would not have been hit a bit without those two things I talked about: local services, \$400 million, and roughly \$800 million less from Hydro One-OPG.

So as I say, next week, as we vote on this bill, that will be the implication of it: the moving of \$1-billion higher personal income tax and \$250 million of residential tax. A far wiser thing, in our opinion, would have been to say, "Listen, we want corporate taxes absolutely competitive." As a matter of fact, one of the previous speakers from the Conservative caucus said that the corporate taxes are four percentage points below our competitors in the US already. So we already will be substantially below the US. But the government has decided that it did not properly plan its finances and it cannot afford to do what it won the election on, and that is the 20% cut in personal income tax.

Frankly, I think they're right. I don't think they did plan things properly. I do think there is a significant fiscal problem. I do not think they could afford what they promised and what they got elected on, and that's why we didn't run on that basis.

As I say, this particular bill is unusual because it has Durham university in it and it has the change of the

Ryerson name in it. It has several extraneous things in it designed to try to rush the bill through to make sure there's no delay. But it will profoundly change the public's attitude toward their government. They firmly believed that this Taxpayer Protection Act actually meant something and they firmly believed that the personal income tax cut that they were promised, that was put into legislation and protected by the Taxpayer Protection Act—it will all just be thrown out the window. They'll say, "Sorry, we changed our mind and we're going to have to delay that a year." Again, I add that it's being delayed to 2004.

In terms of the transparencies in the books—there are many parts of this legislation designed to get rid of the two sets of books. I believe the province has added about \$5 billion of what I call off-book debt. It's debt that would have been on the province's books; it's now on somebody else's books. If that is the case, by the way, it shows that the debt of the province, if you add that \$5 billion, has not actually gone down under the Harris-Eves regime, it has gone up modestly. I believe that to be the case. You can see it, by the way, on the capital expenditures. Capital expenditures last year were the lowest they've been in the province in 20 years. They were under \$2 billion, on the province's books, for the first time since at least 1983-84. Why is that? Because they offloaded capital on to somebody else's books. But the taxpayer of Ontario is still 100% responsible for it because they pay the principal and interest costs on that.

On several counts, I think the budget is unfortunate, and the budget bill reflects that, from the recognition that eight years after promising to get rid of the two sets of books, it still hasn't happened, and that the Taxpayer Protection Act is now essentially gone. The people of Ontario, who have been promised \$1 billion of personal income tax cuts starting January 2003, will no longer see that.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I am happy to participate in this budget bill debate this evening and follow the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who said pretty eloquently that those 5,500 or so people in Windsor West who voted Conservative in the last election voted for something that they believed—they trusted the government—and that was this Taxpayer Protection Act. This government has been about tax cuts, there's no question about it. We are about health care, education and the environment; this government is about tax cuts.

But what we got delivered in the budget the other day in this House were delays and suspensions. In fact, the bill we're debating this evening has that cute little phrase, "an amendment"; just a tiny little regulation, an amendment, so they can go forward with delays of these tax cuts without having to go to a full referendum. For anyone who watched the proceedings in this House when we had a debate about whether we should go forward with referenda, they included it in this Taxpayer Protection Act and said that if any government were to increase taxes or not implement what they had announced as tax

cuts, they would have to go to a province-wide referendum.

Here's the first opportunity for the government, the same government that brought the act in—promised in the budget, promised the last time they went out for election and got themselves elected—and here we are in this budget, the first under Ernie Eves, the Premier, called a pinko by his colleague leadership rival at the time, and he broke the law.

Those 5,500 people who voted Conservative did so because they believed what the government said. The best thing today is that this government absolutely cannot be trusted, and we have proof positive of that.

I too find it very interesting that they included so many other little things in this budget bill, that they would just roll it all into one. When we vote on this, they'll even capture Jim Flaherty, this Minister of Enterprise and—whatever his ministry's called—so that he too will have to vote for that, because they put Durham College in that bill. If he were to be opposed to that, it would be detrimental to him in his own home riding. That hostage, Jim Flaherty, is going to have to stand up in this House and vote for this, even though he, of all the cabinet ministers, was the one who said, "Absolutely, we will go forward with tax cuts."

After the September 11 international event, this huge tragedy, he came into this House at the time as Minister of Finance and said, "We will accelerate tax cuts because this government has always said that tax cuts pay for themselves. They generate revenue." But here we have an entire shift under the new Finance Minister, Janet Ecker, and the new Premier, Ernie Eves, who are now sounding like what most people call quite liberal. As my leader, Dalton McGuinty, put it to him the other day in this same House, "If the people want liberal, they may as well vote for the real thing." We hope you are going to give them an opportunity to go to that vote very shortly.

You certainly wouldn't go for that vote in a referendum, which is what your own law called for, and yet here we are today looking at a budget bill that is an amendment to the Taxpayer Protection Act. That is a break in trust for the very people who voted for you. If that's why they voted for you and you break that very trust, then I suspect this is the beginning of your undoing.

That may well have happened some time ago just on the health fiasco itself, which I would like to address this evening in this bill. In 1995, all parties were acknowledging that restructuring was required in the health system because people were not getting services they required in health. This government came along in 1995 and made massive cuts across the board in various sectors within the health system on the basis that they were restructuring. They were going to put the emphasis in the community and they were going to change how we do business in the health system.

Here we are, seven years later, with this budget announcing operating levels to hospitals back to 1995 levels, and we're supposed to give this government a standing ovation for finally recognizing massive oper-

ating deficits at all the hospitals across the province. Now, remember, these are the same hospitals that you said weren't doing a good job; you said you had to cut their budgets, and you were going to move those services into the community where the people wanted them.

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This is the same government that created the Health Services Restructuring Commission and through 1997 and 1998 made various sweeping recommendations of changing how they do business in the health system: merging hospitals, closing others, restructuring, building, closing. I remember well the two emergency rooms that closed in Windsor West at the time, without the benefit of expansion at the remaining two sites; when the ambulances were backed up and had nowhere to go but to roll those patients down the driveways on the gurney and into the emergency rooms because of the health mismanagement of this government.

And here we are today, with some of the most galling language in this, which says, "Hospital emergency rooms have been expanded and upgraded to provide quicker service." People in my community would laugh if they heard this.

Do you know what they've instituted in emergency rooms in Windsor? They have a new pain protocol. Do you know why they do that? I know this particular member from Durham spent some time in Windsor; he might know. They have a new pain protocol in the emergency room so if you're screaming in pain but you can't get in to see a doctor, the nurse may have some opportunity now to administer pain medication while you're sitting in the chair in the waiting room. That's the response in Windsor because we haven't been able to restructure properly, because this government hasn't come forward with the capital dollars required on a timely basis and moved services to where they belong in the community so we don't have that massive bungling of everybody rushing to the emergency room—but today they can only rush to two, whereas they used to rush to four.

We heard from my colleague from Frontenac the other day about a new protocol in the emergency rooms in her riding, only they were dealing with zero tolerance for aggressive behaviour in emergency rooms—I know the Speaker remembers this well—where you are not allowed any aggressive behaviour whatsoever in emergency rooms. Can you believe this is what we've come to in Ontario? And this government has the gall to say in this budget, "upgraded to provide quicker service." This is a joke. All I can tell you is that no system has been more badly bungled than this one in these last seven years, and we're watching it.

The worst part is that so much of it was so predictable. We exposed some time ago that the capital requirement for all of this restructuring was woefully inadequate. The response to this problem was that they created—I think they called it something actually very clever—a health capital planning review. Well, I'm sorry to say to our hospital CEOs that that just means yet more delays. That would be yet another bureaucratic mess to have to go

through to validate what you've already submitted in applications, to validate the fact that you deserve the money you asked for in the first place.

I ask the government to have a look at home care, the one area that was supposed to benefit, that was supposed to structure itself to accept the people who were being thrown out of hospital, quicker and sicker, into care in the home, which they wanted as well. So demand for the service rose exponentially while the funding for that same service rose by likely less than half of what was required. And they stand today on their high horse and talk about how many more millions of dollars they've put in. The reality is that this government created the policy to require the demand to go through the roof and did not provide matching resources to cover the demand they created. That's where we are today.

When home care organizations screamed about what was going on and when people were being cut off from services they had had and that they required, what did the government do in the last session? They brought in Bill 130, which muzzled all of the CCACs, these community care access centres, essentially shut them down and put in their own government appointees whom they expect will toe the line and essentially be the government. And who do they report to? Directly to the Minister of Health. What does that mean for us? We can't even look at an annual sheet that tells us at the end of the year that financially they spent at least as much on nursing care as they did the year before. They don't want us to see that information any longer. This is just more mismanagement of the health system.

Today and yesterday, the Minister of Health had to admit that in the throne speech this year they took away the target of primary care reform, where all physicians would participate in it to the tune of some 80% of all doctors in Ontario. We are nowhere near that goal. The 2% of physicians involved in these rostered systems of family health networks were the pilot projects. Sure, we've got this group going out there and talking, trying to cajole the doctors along, but there's a good reason they're not signing up: they don't understand it. It's very complicated. We're not sure there's enough money to offer these people so they would make at least as much as they're making in the current system.

Did it not occur to these business-minded folks, as they call themselves on that side of the House, that in order to have change in the system, change costs money? If you come from my community in Windsor, when they decide to change the assembly line in one of our plants to create a new product, they have to spend \$1 billion. It costs money to make change, something this government hasn't been prepared to acknowledge. Yet we're supposed to give them a standing ovation because in this budget they're now talking about bringing operating costs of hospitals back to 1995 funding levels, only this time we have many fewer hospitals, many fewer emergency rooms, many fewer physicians.

Speaking of physicians, we haven't seen the redress of how we will get more family doctors that we so des-

perately need into our province. This morning we saw another report come out nationwide that is so largely impacting in Ontario that says we don't have nurses graduating to take the places of those who are leaving and those who are required. The member for Durham may find this very funny. The reality is that if you come to my university, speak to our nursing students and ask, "How many of you plan to work in Ontario?" do you know what they say? "We likely won't. We don't think the Ontario system wants us." It certainly doesn't provide the working conditions for them to want to stay. So you have a retention issue as well as a recruitment issue, something that will cause grave danger not just for the government but for people who require the service. None of that was addressed in this budget. None of that was addressed even in the throne speech that this budget was to follow.

As for the so-called spending increase in health from \$17.6 billion in 1995 to \$25.5 billion today, let me quote someone who said, "The amount of money that government spends is not the only measure of good health care. Sustaining the quality" they deserve "requires restructuring and reforming our health care system." It's the one thing we have never had. We have never had people on that side of the House with the foresight to restructure in good planning ways to put resources and personnel in the field when you said that was where we were to go. Every party in this House agreed that restructuring was required, and you didn't know how to get us there. It's obvious you still don't know how to get us there today.

Your primary care reform? When Jim Wilson was the Minister of Health back in 1995, he was doing cartwheels across the carpet in this chamber talking about primary care reform. His staff will remember well. We thought he was going to have a coronary, he was so excited talking about primary care reform. That was seven years ago. Nothing has happened in primary care reform.

Then came Liz Witmer. I remember when she was the Minister of Health. She participated in the firing of thousands and thousands of nurses. So today Tony Clement is answering reporters outside and saying, "We're working on getting these nurses." People are looking at you quite cynically. You fired them. You created this instability in the health system. Are we supposed to expect them now to come parading back into our hospitals, prepared to work again? This is the government that fired them.

Today we see Dr Ruth Wilson, the dean from Kingston who is out there day after day, speaking to doctors about joining these primary health networks, to get busy, to change and reform the system. I ask you, what was the health minister thinking when he went to Oakville to do the ribbon-cutting of that latest primary care network? Not one nurse practitioner was part of that group, defeating the entire purpose of having primary care reform: to introduce allied professionals into the health system so that people see the right professional at the right time. How else would you save money and improve care but to get people seeing the right professional at the right time? Imagine having a ribbon-cutting

of a new family health network with not one nurse practitioner as part of the group. Why was that? There was no money offered to that group of doctors in Oakville for them to afford to hire a nurse practitioner as part of the group.

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I say again to the government, change requires funding. You were to have had those bugs worked out before you went there. We haven't seen a piece of privacy legislation, which is absolutely required as we move forward in primary care reform. Where did it go? I can understand the government being shell-shocked because you had a terrible time the last time you attempted privacy legislation, but we don't know what's happening there. But it is a significant and integral piece of information technology required in primary care reform.

Anyone who was listening, who has followed the health care debate over the years or is even following those who are presenting now to the national Romanow commission, knows these are essential pieces that those who are in the business understand and know, but what it takes is the will of a government to make it happen. This government has failed and it continues to fail. This budget does absolutely nothing to move us forward to a health care system that we can be proud of.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): It's always good to follow my colleague from Windsor, where it was, I hear, 32 degrees today. It's always hot in Windsor.

Mrs Pupatello: Hot and humid.

Mr Colle: Hot and humid.

I'm very pleased to be in the debate on the budget bill. I think, like most budget bills, it takes time for the public to understand what's in a bill that's so complex and critically important to the future of this province. I'm glad we have a little bit of time to debate it and talk about it to the public out there, who are, I think, the ones primarily affected.

I'd just like to put a Toronto perspective on this budget. I know sometimes Toronto is a four-letter word around here, but it is a city that harbours 2.5 million to three million people from all over Ontario, from all over Canada, from all over the world. If you travel through the streets of Toronto today, or any day, you can see the great pride there is in this city. Whether you're from South Korea or you're from Turkey, people are always welcome in Toronto. I think it's a city that, certainly in this budget, has been given very short shrift. In fact, I don't think there's one line item in this budget that helps the 2.5 million people in the city of Toronto.

The most devastating thing is that this budget continues the seven years of downloading on to the property taxpayers of Toronto, the downloading of that incredible burden of housing—with no help from this government—where property taxpayers, small business people, homeowners and tenants have to pay for affordable public housing and assisted housing on their property taxes. I think we're the only jurisdiction in the western world that's expected to pay for public housing on property taxes. This budget continues that seven-year legacy

of the downloading of housing onto property taxes, and does not lessen that burden whatsoever.

As you know, as great and thriving as the city of Toronto is, one of the real crises we face, that again is very seldom mentioned in this chamber, is that there is a severe crisis in the affordability of housing of any kind. Certainly there's been a lot of financial prosperity in Toronto, not for all, but I'll tell you, if you try to find a place to rent, if you're a young couple trying to find a place to buy, it is basically impossible, unless you've inherited a great deal of money, to buy a house. We're talking about houses with 15-foot frontages that are going for \$400,000. These are not fancy houses. Never mind the property taxes on these houses; you'll find property taxes on 15-foot frontage homes on Euclid Avenue to be \$5,000, \$6,000 a year.

This government and this budget pays no attention to that real burden on property taxpayers, homeowners, the tenants who have to pay exorbitant rents, and especially senior tenants, older tenants who have very marginal incomes. This budget doesn't mention housing at all—does nothing for housing whatsoever, zilch, nothing, nada. It does nothing for housing. This is a crisis, again, for 2.5 million people in Toronto. How could a government pretend to write a thoughtful budget if it doesn't recognize one major crisis that's facing the largest city, the capital of the province?

I don't think this government spends even five minutes a month talking about trying to help the city of Toronto. I'm not talking about the city; I'm talking about the city and its people, who just want a little bit of a hand. They don't want a handout from this government, because people in the city of Toronto—and I know when you drive around in your Mercedes you don't realize that people in the city of Toronto come to this city—I've seen them—and run pizza delivery services, they clean offices at night, they work in variety stores, they have three or four jobs to make ends meet so that five or six people can live in a one-bedroom apartment. There are hundreds of thousands of people in Toronto who do that. There's not one thing this government gives them. They don't ask this government, whose ministers drive by in their limousines, for any help. All they say is, "Stop hurting us. Give us a chance. Keep our English-as-a-second-language schools open."

I have two of the finest schools for English as a second language, and they are filled with wonderful people from all over the world: Flemington adult day school and Yorkdale adult day school. These are amazing people, as I said. They will be driving all night delivering things, cleaning offices, yet they come home, and then do you know what they do when they come home? They actually get about two or three hours' sleep, then they're off to school to learn English as a second language or try to get their high school so they can get a better job. Yet this government is closing down those opportunities in these schools.

It's crazy, because we know that 99% of these students who come to Toronto from different countries,

from Somalia or Turkey or wherever it is, will earn more money, pay more taxes, buy cars, buy houses. But this government gives them no help, no recognition. They're not mentioned in this budget. They don't really appreciate the hard work of hundreds of thousands of Torontonians who are in this city and making it such a prosperous city that, by the way, we are giving the provincial government \$4 billion a year more than we get back in taxes. So we're losing \$4 billion a year. We pay extra to the provincial coffers that we don't get back, in everything from provincial sales tax to gas tax to this land transfer tax.

If we could only keep the land transfer taxes that we give to Queen's Park, we'd be able to help a lot of Toronto people maybe have a better life. But the people of Toronto are seen as a cash cow by Queen's Park. It is very evident in this budget. If they could only keep a little portion of the taxes that they pay—but every year \$4 billion from Toronto taxpayers' pockets goes to this government and they get nothing for it—\$4 billion more that they give Queen's Park than they get back. They're not asking to get it back—it's their own money; it's their own taxes they're paying. They just want to get a little bit back so their property taxes are a little lower, a little bit back so they have some housing for seniors, a little bit back so they can improve their public school system, or maybe a little back to reopen the eight hospitals that they closed.

Talking about the public school system, we do have, fortunately, in my part of Toronto some of the finest public schools in North America. You've all heard of them, because the real estate agents, whenever they sell housing, always say, "Come to Allenby, live near Allenby, in the Allenby school district"—that's right in the real estate ads—or John Ross Robertson, or Ledbury Park school, Blessed Sacrament school, Lawrence Park school. These are publicly funded schools. They're some of the finest in this country. Yet for seven years this government has beaten them up, taken money out of our schools. The buildings are now run-down. We used to have four or five caretakers per school; we're down to one or two. They're dirty; they're filthy, because this government, with that ludicrous so-called funny funding formula, has tried to destroy our schools. But believe me, they will not destroy them, because these schools are just filled with dedicated parents, teachers and students. So we won't let them destroy them, but they've tried their best to destroy schools like John Ross Robertson, Ledbury Park, Blessed Sacrament, North Toronto, Northern Secondary School—some of the finest schools in Canada. For seven years they've been beat up upon by this government. This budget essentially does nothing to help these fine schools, their students and their families who have made these great community schools the envy of North America.

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If you also look at our schools you'll see, when we used to be able to keep some of the property taxes, that this government wasn't gouging out of Toronto, that we

never used to worry about having our swimming pools closed. Now we're threatened every day with swimming pools being closing, where children learn how to swim. We have children with autism who have no place now in this public school system where once they would have had this help. We're seeing teachers' aides, who get paid nine bucks per hour, being laid off and fired because there's no money in the budget, as you know. As a result of Bill 160, this government totally controls every cent of public education, yet they won't give the money back that Toronto schools pay to Queen's Park.

That's all we're saying: why not just keep in Toronto some of that \$4 billion you gouge out of Toronto every year to help keep our schools, our hospitals our roads and our public transit system?

If you want to look at public transit, again, just like housing, there is no other public transit system in Europe, in Chicago, San Francisco, even in Texas—in Houston, the state and the federal government provide for subsidies. It has been the responsibility of the provincial government here for 100 years to provide subsidies so the transit could run in these cities. Toronto gets zero dollars from this government for transit operating. It all comes out of the fare box and property taxes.

When officials of the TTC go to different cities in the world and they mention that, they're shocked in horror. They say, "You mean you run a transit system like Toronto's, with its subway and its million passengers per day, with no help from your provincial government?" They just laugh at the fact that we're able to do this. They can't believe we get our subway running every day, our buses running, with no help from this provincial government.

It's so short-sighted. If you invest in Toronto's transit system or in its schools or hospitals, you generate more wealth. You generate more economic activity. You'll get more of your property taxes. You'll get more of your provincial sales tax. You'll get more of your land transfer tax. You'll get more than the \$2 billion that you collect every year in gas tax in Toronto. They'd get more of these taxes, but they're so short-sighted that they're essentially hurting the real revenue generator for this whole province and country. As you know, the game of this government, as it is in this budget, is to try to make the provincial government look good by downloading everything else on to property taxes.

This downloading exercise, started by Al Leach and continued by Ernie Eves, is essentially a game the people have caught on to. They know, even though they got that \$200 cheque in the mail that time, that their property taxes are going up; they know they're paying more for transit; they know the infrastructure of the city is failing because this government is not investing in cities.

It would be interesting if one day in a budget in this Legislature they really had an agenda for cities. Can you believe that? If the word "city" was ever mentioned in a budget in this Legislature, it would be I guess another four-letter word. "City" is a four-letter word for this government: "City? Toronto? We can't talk about them.

They're the enemy. Toronto is the enemy because that's where all the people who disagree with us live, somehow."

This budget does nothing to reverse the seven years of beating up, of downloading, of shuffling off responsibility, to the detriment of the people who need good hospitals. I remember when they closed the hospitals. It was that guy, Duncan Sinclair. Remember him? He was Mike Harris's right-hand man there. He went around closing all the hospitals, and this guy was going to save our health care system: "When we get all the money out of closing hospitals, we're going to put it into home care. We're going to do everything."

Well, Duncan Sinclair and Mike Harris closed all the hospitals; they fired all the nurses. There's still no money. What did they do with all those millions that Mike Harris and Duncan Sinclair took out of the hospital system? They certainly didn't put it into home care. Where are those millions they took out of Toronto hospitals? That's the question. We need maybe—what do they call those?—an audit or something to see where those millions went.

Anyway, this budget is really in many ways a continuation of pure downloading, neglect of cities, neglect of ordinary people and their concerns about raising a family.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Marchese: I want to congratulate the members from Scarborough-Agincourt, Windsor West and Eglinton-Lawrence for their very relevant comments and say to the citizens that I will be adding my own supplementary comments to those that have been heard in approximately 10 minutes or so; that would be 9:10. In the event that you're still watching, I'll be on in 10 minutes.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I just want to respond specifically to the member for Windsor West. I spent some time with her recently, and I think she's coming around to understanding.

I have to take some issue with what the member for Eglinton-Lawrence said. Today we discussed Bill 5 from the member for Kingston and the Islands, and it was about accountability in the government. If I look at the budget statement which we're debating tonight, I expect the opposition to support this, because it's basically stolen most of what Dalton and Mr Phillips were trying to get. But we've done it. The difference is, as government, we get to do it.

Quite honestly, the health care issue is important to me in my riding of Durham. I think immediately of Lakeridge Health. I think of Brian Lemon, Anne Wright, Judy Spring—the chair of Lakeridge Health—and I think of the highlights of the health care initiative: support for hospitals by 7.7% to \$9.4 billion, allowing for the expansion of priority programs such as cardiac services—I could tell you a whole story on that alone—dialysis and MRIs. There's over \$250 million in additional funding for diagnostic services and payments to physicians and other practitioners; nearly \$200 million to support

residents in long-term care; \$50 million by 2005-06 to support collaborative degree programs in medical education and nursing education; \$14 million to support the expansion of undergraduate medical.

They've missed the entire point. By the few comments I've made in less than two minutes, I believe now they've come around, they'll support the budget, and I have every confidence that this government will move forward with the support of the people of Ontario.

The Speaker: Further questions and comments? The member for—

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): St Paul's.

The Speaker: St Paul's was up first, yes.

Mr Bryant: I was ready to defer to the member from Niagara.

Yes, I too congratulate the members for Scarborough-Agincourt, Windsor West and Eglinton-Lawrence.

I've just come from a meeting with the Heath Street tenants' association, and many of their concerns are the concerns that in particular the member for Eglinton-Lawrence was talking about. They are receiving another above-guideline rent increase. It is the result of, I think, an unintended effect of the Tenant Protection Act, which permits for gouging of tenants. The tenant destruction act, as it turns out, has a provision in it that permits landlords to get the benefit of a utility increase, which makes sense, but if the utility then goes down, you'd think the rent should go down. But it doesn't work that way. The Tenant Protection Act, at least the way it has been interpreted by the dispute tribunal—I think wrongly, but they're the tribunal—has been to the contrary. That's actually before the Divisional Court as we speak, and we hope to get a good result.

The member for Don Valley East brought a private member's bill to correct that. We tried to get the government's support on that, but we did not. We'll keep on trying to fight to ensure that we do make those changes. Of course, we've got to repeal the Tenant Protection Act, but that's going to have to wait until after the next election, obviously. In the meantime, I continue to urge the government to take a look at this provision. It really is unjust. It permits unjust enrichment. It permits double-dipping. I don't think it was actually ever the intention of the government to have this particular provision, or at least to have the tribunal to interpret it in this way.

I was helping out tenants in St Paul's, and I'm happy to be back in the Legislature and listen to those members. I look forward to continued debate on the budget, especially to hear from the member for Trinity-Spadina.

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The Speaker: The member for Durham. Oh, he already spoke. I'm sorry. The member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: I know the member already commented, and that's unfortunate.

I simply want to say of the speeches, the member did not have sufficient time or she would have mentioned the situation with Visudyne. People in Ontario who were getting these treatments for macular degeneration had to

pay \$2,500 out of their own pocket. It was most unfortunate. We in the opposition, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, made a plea to the people of Ontario and to the government, and finally they capitulated to this plea and agreed to fund Visudyne, but only after all kinds of pressure.

What is unfortunate is that they said they would pay only back to April 1 of this year. As a result of that April 1 date, which is most unfortunate, people who had those treatments earlier, which cost about \$2,500 apiece, had to pay out of their own pockets. Some of the people mortgaged their homes, some drained their bank accounts. People made some tremendous economic sacrifices in order to pay for this.

I think the government has an obligation, as I'm sure my colleagues do, to pay for the treatments right back to the time that Health Canada approved this as an appropriate treatment for a form of macular degeneration. I know there are hundreds upon hundreds of people in Ontario who are waiting to hear the minister get up and agree that they should pay back to the time when it was first agreed by Health Canada that this was an appropriate treatment.

The Speaker: Response?

Mrs Pupatello: I always find it fascinating to hear what the members of the Conservative Party have to say about my comments on the budget.

Having had a chance to speak with the member from Durham, we absolutely never agree on much in terms of policy, but there are things in this budget bill that we would agree with. The Durham College that's been included in this budget bill, of course we agree. I think in the name of true co-operation, when there are things that we agree upon, we should just say so. As a matter of fact, I'd like to call for unanimous consent to have second and third reading of Bill 139, which has already been on the order paper in the House. Speaker, I'd like to ask for that unanimous consent.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes. You still have a minute left.

Mrs Pupatello: Isn't it fascinating that here we are with the member from Durham, and they don't want to pass the bill. Why? They could have done so. The reality is that these people are busy playing games. They play games with the budget. They fooled the people of Ontario by having them vote for the government, saying that they have a pledge to protect the taxpayer. Ernie Eves, the so-called pinko Premier by his own minister in cabinet, suggests now that he is going to bring in an amendment, because they broke the law. They brought in a budget that essentially invalidates their own law, which is why they need an amendment. Everybody's talking about it. Everybody sees that for what it is. You fooled the people of Ontario and they will remember this. I only wish the government would choose to call an election now.

While the member from Durham is now listening, I would say that if there were things in this bill that we agreed with, we would certainly be happy to participate

in that. So I would ask for unanimous consent to have second and third reading of Bill 139 today, Speaker.

The Speaker: You've already asked once. You can't ask for it again.

Mr Bradley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: in the spirit of co-operation, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to pass second and third reading of Bill 139 right now. Let's have it passed.

The Speaker: That's the one we already did. We asked for it. We didn't get the unanimous consent.

Mr Bradley: I don't think they heard very well over there.

Mr O'Toole: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There's a time and place for moving these things. We're actually debating Bill 109. I think if you had read the right bill—

The Speaker: Order. Member take his seat. It is now time in the rotation for the member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Marchese: Before I start, I want to thank and acknowledge a couple of people. First of all, Speaker, I want to praise you because, I tell you, it takes a great deal of stamina to listen hour after hour to our speeches. You're there, you're strong, you're wide awake, and I've got to acknowledge that to the people watching.

Secondly, I want to acknowledge that Will Stewart is always ever-present in the back. It's hard to believe, these indefatigable young Tories at the back. It's unbelievable. Where do you get the energy? And Lisa Pearson at the back. Is that Lisa there? She's around there, isn't she? She's watching this program. She's someone who makes the office work, I understand. Indefatigable, these young Tories. Where do they find them? It's unbelievable. But I know they're here today watching because there is so much to learn from what we have to say. That's why they are here. I'm happy they are joining us, including Matt Macdonald and Aaron Campbell, who are here watching and listening to the debates because there is so much to learn.

I want to tell you, Will, in the budget—for the people of Ontario watching, it's about 9:10. It's almost over. I can't believe it. Here's what the 2002 Ontario Budget says, on page 6, for those of you watching. "Tax cuts are central to the plan," it's titled. Then it reads, "Our government has pursued an aggressive tax cut plan for one very simple reason. Tax cuts work."

Here's the point: if tax cuts work, presumably, Will, they work all of the time, not part time, full time. Yes or no, Will? If tax cuts work—Will, Lisa, and other friends, Matt and Aaron—that means they work universally and they ought to work irrespective of the times. Because the first paragraph says, "Tax cuts work."

I understand that. The people of Ontario understand that. What they don't understand is the subsequent paragraph that reads, "In the meantime, because of our short-term fiscal situation, I propose to introduce legislation to delay," Will, "for one year only, the current planned reductions in personal income tax and in the general and manufacturing rates of corporate income tax, and the next step of the equity in education tax credit."

Chris, nice to see you. Chris, this is of interest to you.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): That's why I came in.

Mr Marchese: Please.

So it says here, "In the meantime"—Chris, you've got to listen. Thanks for coming, but you've got to listen: Stockwell? Chris? Chris? He's not paying attention. Why did he come in here if he's not going to listen?

Will, disregard Chris Stockwell because he doesn't want to listen to me for a moment.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm listening.

Mr Marchese: You weren't listening. I called you four times. You say in this document, "Tax cuts work."

Hon Mr Stockwell: Yes.

Mr Marchese: He agrees. But then you say, "In the meantime, because of our short-term fiscal situation, I propose to introduce legislation to delay...." The problem with that logic, Chris, is that if tax cuts work, you don't delay, you do it. You do it on a part-time basis, you do it on a full-time basis, you do it all the time, irrespective of whether the economy is good or bad. Why? Because tax cuts work. If they work, they work perennially. It's a motor that never lets go. It doesn't stop—the Eveready battery. But the Tories said, "In the meantime, we've got to slow this thing down." Have you ever heard a Tory in this assembly in the past six, seven years say, "We've got to slow this down"?

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Mr Smitherman: Just in the last four days.

Mr Marchese: Only since the introduction of this budget. What it suggests to me, Chris, is that tax cuts don't work.

Mr Bryant: Maybe.

Mr Marchese: Maybe they don't work all of the time, but then you could have said that. You could have said, "In a good economy we can get away with giving tax cuts; when the economy slows down, we won't be able to."

Now here's the other problem, Minister, Chris: if the economy slows down a little more—because you don't know. I don't either. In fact, I anticipated this economy was going to slip and slip badly, but it didn't. You're lucky, God bless. But if it slips a little more, we're going to have another budget next year that says, "In the meantime, we're going to have to slow this down a little more." To follow the logic of "in the meantime," since September 11 happened and slowed you folks down, presumably there could be something else. You'll invent a September 12 next year or a September 13, because it'll be an unlucky day. You follow?

It was a neat little thing for the Premier and the Minister of Finance to all of a sudden grab on to this mythical September 11. Catherine Swift today on a program said—all of you probably know her. She represents the independent business association, the small business association. She said September 11 had some effect but it was minor compared to the gloom and doom of all the other commentators, particularly Mike Harris and Ernie Eves. Now they blame everything on September 11.

Everything that goes wrong now can be connected to September 11.

Speaker, do you remember when you were here on the other side? Yes, you do. I do too. I remember when Chris Stockwell was here on the other side too. We used to say, "We have an economic slowdown," which we normally call a recession, unless it gets severe over three or four terms, and then it's a depression. We had a recession, and Chris and you and Harris and all the other clan would clamour, saying, "We don't have a recession." Do you remember that? Others would say, "You have a spending problem, not a revenue problem." Now the Tories have a September 11. That's real. The New Democratic Party recession was created by us—mythical, an invention—because we're so creative. But with the Tories, no recession: we have September 11. That's the woe we are suffering that has caused this financial problem for this government, that has forced them to, in the meantime, slow down the tax cuts. But don't worry. Next year it will all be better because they say so, and, "We will bring back the tax cuts that you, taxpayers, are about to lose." The Tories are about to give you a hit because of September 11.

My point to you, taxpayers, is that if tax cuts worked, this government would have continued with them. They have a fiscal problem they cannot correct. They don't have enough money. The reason they don't have enough money is that \$8 billion or so are rolling out in income tax cuts both for the corporate and individual sector, and they're broke. Their pockets have holes now. They can't contain the damage. The money is just trickling out of those empty pockets and they've got none left. That's the problem with the tax cuts. Member from Halton, that's the problem with the tax cuts. You don't have any money any more. You need the \$2 billion or so you were about to give to the corporate sector and individual tax cuts to high-income Ontarians. You needed that money. Why? To be able to make all these little promises you made to everybody, trying to make everybody feel good with this budget. To tell you the truth, this money is not enough. Why isn't it enough? Because you people are about to raise the tobacco taxes. Some of you feel so uncomfortable to say, "This is good for people's health so we've got to increase the taxes." You don't have the nerve to say, "We've got to increase tobacco taxes because we need money." Some of you feel so uncomfortable with that dichotomy, that issue, you don't know how to handle it. What you need to say, Tory MPPs, is, "We've got to increase tobacco taxes because we need money." Say that. You're going to have to try real hard to convince people you're doing it to save people's lives, real hard.

They, Ontarians, need money, a lot of it: the \$2 billion they have deferred, the tobacco taxes and the selling off of 49% of Hydro One and/or Ontario Power Generation so that they can bring "private sector discipline" to Hydro One. They need to sell 49% of Hydro One and/or Ontario Power Generation in order to have the revenues that are required to keep them afloat, in order not to have to

devastate education, health and social services, the Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministries of Labour and Culture any further.

If some of you felt that you had been whacked hard in the last seven years, if those income tax cuts went ahead as they had been planned, imagine what you would have had to suffer—yes, you taxpayers—if they had done that. They would not have had the money. They would have had to cut deeper in health, deeper in education, deeper in social services, cut deeper in the Ministry of the Environment, cut deeper in natural resources and labour and so on.

The money's not there. So they have to invent this bringing private sector discipline to Hydro One. Hydro One, Ontario Hydro, was working just fine. I say to you that if the Tories had not frozen the hydro rates in good economic times, we would have been able to get some of the money we needed to pay down the debt. While we New Democrats could justify a freeze because there was a recession, you cannot justify your freezes on hydro in good economic times, but you did, thus aggravating the debts that we have and then blaming Ontario Hydro and the government, presumably, for bringing these debts to it.

We had a good economy. We did. You always argue that. Yes, for some people it's been good, and yes, people have been working more because in good times that's what happens. We have had more revenues. You could have increased those hydro rates in those good economic times and you chose not to, making the debt larger than it ought to have been. That's a choice we governments make. That's a choice you as a government made. It was not a choice of Ontario Hydro; it was a choice you Conservatives made to freeze rates in good economic times. I say to you it was a dumb thing that you did, but you do it with a smile and you do it with, "We're trying to help that poor Hydro One that's caving in. They're having so much trouble. Oh, the debt is so heavy we have to bring the private sector in to help the poor public sector because they don't know how to run it."

Mr Smitherman: They may have to sell the yacht.

Mr Marchese: The yacht. I wonder how many Tories have used that yacht, that and other similar yachts. I certainly have never been on such a big yacht, or even a small yacht. I wonder how many Tories are able to enjoy these long, beautiful, wealthy yachts.

2120

Moving for a second to education—and my colleague from Eglinton-Lawrence made reference to education—I want to make reference to another issue which in the minds of some of you may appear to be small, but the Tories in this budget have given \$5,000 to every school that meets and/or exceeds those standardized literacy tests which these people have instituted. The Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance are going to give 5,000 bucks to every school that does well in those test scores. Think about it, Ontarians.

Listen, I don't blame the former Minister of Education, who is now Minister of Finance, for not under-

standing this issue very well, but I do blame the current Minister of Education, who was both a trustee and a teacher in the past, who ought to know how destructive an idea it is, how offensive, how repulsive, how repellent the idea is.

What does it mean? It means that \$5,000 will go to those schools where the parents are, first of all, wealthy and where the parents, secondarily, are academic achievers, where they come from high-income professional backgrounds and where they are wealthy. Those communities will test well. The children of those communities will test well, and they're going to get 5,000 bucks to throw around in a school where they may not need that money. But the schools that may need it, those that confront poverty, those schools that receive immigrants day in and day out, year in and year out, those schools that receive a great number of refugees, those schools that have a great many single parents who might carry the burden of the problem of being a single parent, those kids who have a lot of learning disabilities in those schools, those inner city areas that desperately need—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: George—that 5,000 bucks—schools in your area. Park school could use 5,000 bucks, but they may not do as well in the test scores as they may do in Allenby, to be fair. I'm not choosing just one school over another. It's based on where you are. It's based on income, class and wealth. Those kids do well and they're going to get money. That's what the Minister of Finance announced just the other day. Speaker, do you understand how dumb that idea is? Yes, you do because you're working on your MA, aren't you? Oh, you've done it, right, Gary?

Hon Mrs Johns: He got his MBA this week.

Mr Marchese: You got it. Congratulations, Speaker. You know, as a learner, what this means. You know, and the Minister of Education ought to know, as a former teacher, that you don't give money to kids who don't need it; you give money to kids who do need it. It's so simple.

Helen Johns, the logic is simple. You understand. You're giving away my money, the taxpayers' money, to schools that don't need money.

Hon Mrs Johns: Where?

Mr Marchese: She wasn't listening. OK, Helen, go. She wasn't listening. She just said, "Where?"

The Minister of Energy is here. He's listening. I know your wife would agree with me on this issue, and I want you to ask your wife. Marchese in the Legislature yesterday said and accused your government of giving 5,000 bucks to schools that meet or exceed the standardized test scores. You tell her Marchese attacked you viciously yesterday, saying, "What a dumb idea that is. Ask your wife." She would know and she would agree with Marchese. Please do that and next week when you come, tell me what she said.

Hon Mr Stockwell: OK. All right.

Mr Marchese: I know all of you are struggling. You're having a hell of a time understanding this. Man,

how many millions of dollars are we giving away for such a stupid, dumb idea when all these schools are crying for money they desperately need for special ed, for English as a second language, for caretakers who clean our schools? You're giving money away that they desperately need to schools that have the money? Do you understand, member for Nepean-Carleton?

This regular communication we have with so many friends in this assembly—you have another communiqué? Let me see the communiqué, please. Do excuse me, Ontarians. You've got something for me? This is great. It's an empty note. Thank you.

He's trying to distract me from my impatience with this issue.

How much time do we have, Speaker? Oh, I've got so much time to make the point that the assumption of this program is that it doesn't matter what social background you bring to the school, it doesn't matter that you are wealthy, it doesn't matter that you are poor, you can both perform at the same level. That's the assumption. Again, I say to you, do you see how dumb the assumption is?

Mr Bryant: It's dumb.

Mr Marchese: Michael?

Mr Bryant: It's crazy. C'est fou.

Mr Marchese: C'est fou. Ils sont fous. How do these people think of these things? Will, I hope you didn't give them that idea. I know all you're trying to do is make your boss look good. I'm convinced you would be a bit smarter than that, but somebody must have fed this government this particular gem of an idea.

It's not going to go too far. As soon as the parents of our system know you've done this, they're going to come down on you. They're going to come down on you as I am. Yet some of them are yelling, and they're smiling, they're happy, this budget is great. This is a dumb idea, member for—where is it?—Oxford.

Mr Hardeman: Oh, that's me.

Mr Marchese: I got you.

It's a dumb idea. You've got to help me out. First, you've got to knock some sense into the Minister of Education.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: You do. I've got tell you: she's given me some wacko answers. Let me get to another one here, where I say to the Minister of Education—

Hon Mr Stockwell: What about those Koreans?

Mr Marchese: They won. Italy lost. It's true. Italy had a good team. They lost. Korea won, and it was a wonderful celebration on Bloor Street—I was there the other day—from University all the way to Christie, right in the heart of my riding. My riding.

Mr Bryant: Did that make you feel bad?

Mr Marchese: It was hurtful. It's true. But I marched from University all the way to Christie just to celebrate with them, because celebration is celebration. Victories are good. I love to see these communities enjoy themselves. They do. It was hurtful to me, because I lost, my team lost. But celebrations are beautiful; it doesn't matter who celebrates. Isn't that true, Chris?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Yeah, right.

Mr Marchese: Back to the Minister of Education.

I said to the minister, "Look, music is a wonderful program to have." In fact it connects to math scores. You do better in academic achievement if you're studying music. You don't drop out if you're studying music. That's the view of the studies. So I said to the minister, "What are you going to do about the fact that the Elementary Teachers' Federation has done a study and it shows there's a 7% drop in music? It used to be 11%, then 9% and now it's 7%. You're catching up. You're making up some lost time. But it's still a loss of music teachers." And she said—I don't know what she said; it's so hard—"We put in some money and we also increased the amount of flexible funding available." And I said,

"Jesus, with all this flexibility these boards have, how come they're still cutting ESL"—the English as a second language program, for those of you who may not know—"music programs, music teachers, librarians, library teachers, physical education teachers, special ed, educational assistants, caretakers?" I said, "Man, oh, man, with all the flexibility these boards have, they should be doing OK."

Mr Smitherman: Big finish.

Mr Marchese: The time is? I bid you farewell. We'll see you, when? Monday maybe?

The Speaker: It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

The House adjourned at 2129.

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Monday 24 June 2002

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Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 24 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 24 juin 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FÊTE DE LA SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): C'est un honneur pour moi de souligner aujourd'hui une grande fête qui se célèbre par tous les francophones et francophiles à travers notre beau pays, le Canada. C'est la fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, le patron des Canadiens français.

En effet, la langue française est présente dans notre province depuis plus de 350 ans. La communauté franco-phone de l'Ontario compose la communauté francophone la plus nombreuse au Canada, après celle du Québec. Le français est une des langues officielles du Canada. En Ontario, il jouit du statut de langue officielle devant les tribunaux, dans l'éducation et à l'Assemblée législative.

La vie culturelle et communautaire francophone bouillonne en Ontario. On y retrouve des centres culturels, de nombreux comités et clubs et des groupes étudiants, sans mentionner l'Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario, le principal organisme porte-parole de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Depuis l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français, la mise en place d'institutions collégiales et universitaires de la langue française, la dévolution des pouvoirs, la promotion de la francophonie ontarienne, le développement d'infrastructures médiatiques, la vitalité de la communauté franco-ontarienne et le programme national de l'enfance figurent parmi les priorités de l'ACFO.

Aujourd'hui je souhaite bonne fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste à tous et toutes qui ont oeuvré sans relâche à protéger nos droits et acquis linguistiques et qui font vivre à chaque jour le français autour d'eux.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): In this, the last week of the Legislature's spring session, I am hoping the Leader of the Opposition will finally take a position and stick with it.

Last week, Dalton McGuinty protested the one-year postponement of the corporate tax cut; a week earlier, his party recommended it. His colleague was forced to eat his hat. After this, his most recent flip-flop, I would be

happy to send over a hat for the Leader of the Opposition. Dalton McGuinty flip-flops like a sunfish out of the Rideau River. I believe that Ontario's working families deserve some consistency from the Leader of the Opposition.

My constituents in Scarborough Centre are particularly pleased that the government has delivered both tax cuts and increased spending in health care, and they look forward to more of both again next year. Dalton McGuinty railed against tax cuts, but now the Leader of the Opposition says he wants them. This amounts to the biggest flip-flop since—well, since his flip-flop on the privatization of Ontario Hydro.

Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition should take the summer off, go to Chicago again and have his American advisers explain that he can't forever get away with taking contradictory positions. Then in the fall, he can return and tell us finally and definitively whether he supports tax cuts or not.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Parents and children in Windsor know all too well that when it comes to education, Ernie Eves is not on their side. On Friday we learned that the high schools in the Catholic school board in Windsor will lose their librarians next year. Children with special needs in the public school board are not getting the services they need. In fact, the waiting lists keep growing, but the school board is getting the same amount of money that it got in 1998.

Since then, the board has registered 200 new special-ed students, students who qualify for supports under the ministry's own guidelines, but the funding is not there. Our public board now has 100 students waiting for psychological assessments. The wait is between one and two years. Those kids who act out or are extremely destructive continue to jump the queue, but the quiet kids continue to wait. The future is bleak for these kids, and it's getting worse, not better.

The public board is now hearing from parents. They are saying, "Why is my child's education being disrupted because special-needs kids don't have proper supports in the classroom?" Our one board needs \$5 million more to meet the needs, but this government has announced \$10 million for the entire province.

Here's what it means to one south Windsor school, where some of our highest-needs kids are clustered: the ratio of child to staff was two to one; it will be three to one. Kids who need two people to move them will wait

even longer. Kids with diapers that need changing will wait even longer.

I ask this government, is this what you intended? Did you intend for it to get worse and not better?

TERRY FOX RUN

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm pleased to rise in the House today to report on the success of the recent Terry Fox Run in the municipality of Clarington. This includes, of course, strong support from across the community, but in particular the business community under the corporate challenge.

I was pleased to attend a breakfast with the team captains for the corporate challenge last week. They kindly brought to my attention the following details: Clarington raised \$71,000 in last year's Terry Fox Run held in Bowmanville. This makes it the eighth largest fundraiser of the 250 communities in Ontario holding Terry Fox runs. Clarington's run is the largest in the area between Toronto and Ottawa. Imagine that.

I'd like to congratulate Matt Yates of Lifestyle Health and Fitness and the members of their team for being the top corporate fundraiser last year. They raised \$4,643.20. I'm proud to say there were 36 corporate teams. Rounding out the top corporate fundraisers were the municipality of Clarington, the Newcastle Lions Club, the Darlington nuclear generating station, and Gibson Associates. I might add that my team was one of the top teams as well.

I'd like to pay tribute to the steering committee for the Terry Fox Run in Clarington. They include Walt Gibson, Pat Marjerrison, Brad Hockin, Cathy Brogan, Mary Tillcock, Bill McIntyre, Bill Swan, Janice McRae, Jack Munday, Donna Kay and Don Yeo. The steering committee was assisted ably by 140 volunteers from the corporate as well as the community sector.

But the real credit goes to the 1,129 participants who walked, ran, cycled and participated generally in support of a cure for cancer and the Terry Fox Run in Clarington.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): Bennett Environmental last week filed with the Ministry of the Environment its environmental assessment documentation to build a hazardous-waste incinerator in the town of Kirkland Lake. Last week, the company filed its assessment submission, and Bennett Environmental constantly throughout this document makes reference to its existing plant in St Ambroise, Quebec, including test burn data from that plant. This plant in Quebec is half the size of the proposed Kirkland Lake facility and uses the same technology save for a few minor modifications.

In a letter I sent to the environmental assessment branch of the Ministry of the Environment, I requested that the daily monitoring results of the stack emissions at the Quebec facility be included in the EA for the pro-

posed Kirkland Lake plant. The ministry has turned this request down, saying that because the incinerator is licensed and operating in the province of Quebec, it is required to meet different environmental standards than required in Ontario. The ministry also states that this technology is different at the Quebec plant.

This is definitely not the case. Throughout the company's EA submission, there are pages and pages that make reference to the operating history of the Quebec facility. This is another example of how the Mike Harris Environmental Assessment Act fails our environment and the people of Ontario.

Two weeks ago, the Canadian Environmental Law Association issued a scathing report of Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act. It said, "The environmental assessment process in this province is a hollow shell of what it was and what it should be."

I ask the Minister of the Environment today to consider these vital data as part of the Bennett incinerator environmental assessment.

1340

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): As you may be aware, over 2,500 diseases have been identified as having a genetic origin, and more than 300,000 adoptees want to know their genetic background. Without this information, adoptees cannot provide their doctors or their families with a medical history.

Adoptees and their families are in great peril and will continue to be so until this Legislature passes Bill 77, the bill to update our adoption disclosure laws in this province. Later this afternoon I will be asking for unanimous consent once again to pass this important bill. I would say that up to 99% of all legislators from all parties, perhaps more, support passing this bill. It has been sent out to committee. I have been bringing such a bill forward since 1999; Tony Martin, before me, brought forward a bill.

The time has passed for Ontario to lag so far behind other jurisdictions all over the world in giving adoptees the same rights that everybody else has in this province. So even if you do not support it for other reasons, please I would ask all members today to pass this bill to protect the health of adoptees across this province.

PORT HOPE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the community of Port Hope, in my riding of Northumberland. Earlier this month, Port Hope was the focus of TVOntario's current affairs program, Studio 2. In the program, Walton Street in downtown Port Hope was recognized as one of the best-preserved Main Streets in its province-wide contest. It is in good company among all other historic downtown areas in Northumberland county. Whether it is Port

Hope's Royal Bank Opera House above the bank or the restored atmospheric Capitol Theatre, I encourage you to come and see for yourself the beauty of this community.

Many thanks to Port Hope tourism coordinator Andrea Patterson for all her hard work, as well as to Port Hope Mayor Rick Austin for promoting and celebrating all that Port Hope has to offer. Many organizations deserve recognition, including the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and Port Hope's Heritage Business Improvement Area.

Finally, congratulations to all residents of Port Hope who have worked so hard to preserve the historical buildings and features of downtown Port Hope, enabling it to win this exciting award.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My statement today is to the Minister of Education. We know that money doesn't buy happiness, but it does buy textbooks, music programs, busing, library books, psychology testing, principals, educational assistants and some office staff.

Minister, you have said several times that our graduates need to compete with graduates from the rest of the world, so let's look at how the rest of the world funds their students. Looking at the elementary level, I talked to a school board and said, "Be generous. How much money do you get per student?" They included busing, they included every possible grant, and said, "About \$6,700." Our graduates compete with graduates from the United States system. If we look at their 50 states they spend, in Canadian dollars, in New Jersey, \$15,941 per student. New Jersey spends that much per pupil. Utah is at the opposite end and spends about \$6,400. Ontario spends about \$6,700 per elementary student. Where does that rank us in North America? We're between state 49 and state 50. Only Utah keeps us from being the lowest-funded system. That is an absolute shame for our graduates, who need to be equipped.

Each and every one of you on that side gets calls from parents who cannot get support for special education. You know they're calling. The reason the supports aren't there is because we're next to the cheapest in North America.

PERIMETER INSTITUTE FOR THEORETICAL PHYSICS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): On June 14, I was honoured to join the Deputy Premier and the Prime Minister of Canada in Waterloo for an announcement of government funding for the Perimeter Institute, funding that will support breakthroughs in theoretical physics, both at the institute and through the establishment of an international research centre at the University of Water-

loo's Institute for Quantum Computing. On that day, the government committed to more than \$11.5 million from the Ontario research and development challenge fund and the Ontario Innovation Trust.

The Perimeter Institute is the brainchild of Mike Lazaridis, co-CEO and founder of Research in Motion, the company that produces the Blackberry, a popular, wireless e-mail system made in Waterloo.

The province has made a sound investment in a research venture in theoretical physics that began when Mike Lazaridis launched the institute, donating \$100 million of his own money to further his other dream of creating a world-class institution devoted to un-tapping nature's most fundamental secrets.

On the Monday following that event, last Monday, the Minister of Finance announced in her budget speech that the government of Ontario has enhanced its commitment, bringing it to a total of \$25 million.

Some time ago, Mike Lazaridis was quoted in the Toronto Star as saying, "If the people don't want to do it, why should the government do it?" He took the lead, and his extraordinary and generous philanthropic gift has created a world-class research institute that will lead to the betterment of humankind.

As the same article pointed out, the Perimeter Institute is dedicated to uncovering the theory of everything, or the rules that unify the subatomic and cosmic realms of matter, potentially making sense of everything on earth and in space.

I'm proud that our government has seen fit to support this outstanding endeavour.

ANNUAL REPORT, OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I laid upon the table the 2001-02 annual report of the Ombudsman.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ROYAL OTTAWA HEALTH CARE GROUP/SERVICES DE SANTÉ ROYAL OTTAWA ACT, 2002

Mr Patten moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr10, An Act respecting Royal Ottawa Health Care Group/Services de Santé Royal Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

**CARLIE MYKE AND BRANDON WHITE
ACT (SAFE SCHOOL ZONES HIGHWAY
TRAFFIC AMENDMENT), 2002**

**LOI CARLIE MYKE ET BRANDON WHITE
DE 2002 (MODIFICATION DU CODE DE LA
ROUTE SUR LA SÉCURITÉ
DES ZONES D'ÉCOLE)**

Mr Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 120, An Act to honour Carlie Myke and Brandon White by amending the Highway Traffic Act to reduce the rate of speed permitted on highways surrounding schools and to ensure traffic safety in school zones / Projet de loi 120, Loi en hommage à Carlie Myke et Brandon White modifiant le Code de la route afin de réduire la vitesse autorisée sur les voies publiques autour des écoles et d'assurer la sécurité routière dans les zones d'école.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Research tells us that a pedestrian hit by a car travelling approximately 70 kilometres per hour has only a 15% chance of survival. By reducing it to 30, this chance increases to a 95% survival rate. The bill reduces the speed at which a motor vehicle can travel on a highway surrounding schools. The rate of speed is reduced to 30 kilometres per hour in the case of two-lane highways and is reduced to 10 kilometres per hour for cases of highways with more than two lanes. The bill requires municipalities and trustees of police villages to establish school traffic safety teams to review traffic problems surrounding schools in the municipality or village and to report to the municipality, the village, the school board and the Ministry of Transportation.

I have with me the parents of Carlie and Brandon in the House, and I would introduce Christine Myke and Jeff Radmore, grandparent Colin Radmore, friend Jenny Stewart, Marie and Mitchell Michalak, grandparents of Carlie, and an aunt, Shirley Roy, who are with us in the House today to support this bill.

1350

**ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT
PROGRAM AMENDMENT ACT, 2002**

**LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE
PROGRAMME ONTARIEN DE SOUTIEN
AUX PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES**

Mr Parsons moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 to empower the Integrity Commissioner to determine the level of income support / Projet de loi 122, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur le Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées en vue de donner au commissaire à l'intégrité le pouvoir de déterminer le niveau de soutien du revenu.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): An Ontarian on the ODSP plan is receiving a maximum of about \$11,000 a year, which is over \$7,000 below the poverty level in this province. This government has been either unwilling or unable to deal with what is a fair amount of money for the ODSP program.

My bill would refer it to the Integrity Commissioner—there has been some precedent for this—to determine the amount the payment should be and the manner in which they should be paid.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm not arguing about the validity of the member's point of order on the last bill introduced, or the issue. I just think there may be some orderliness to it with respect to finances and committing government to future finances. It may in fact be out of order simply because it would be referred to the Integrity Commissioner. I don't profess to know, since I haven't read the bill. There are always these timeliness arguments with respect to introduction of bills. I just want to go on the record that maybe you could review it and report back to the House.

The Speaker: The table will review it, like they do every bill, thoroughly, and they will let us know, like they always do.

LCBO DEPOSIT AND RETURN ACT, 2002

**LOI DE 2002 SUR LES CONSIGNES ET
REMISES EXIGÉES PAR LA RAO**

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 125, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act to require the Liquor Control Board to establish a deposit and return system / Projet de loi 125, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les alcools pour exiger que la Régie des alcools crée un système de consigne et de remise.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): As you know, Mr Speaker, the government liquor monopoly doesn't have to recycle. This bill basically gets rid of that double standard. It amends the Liquor Control Act to require the Liquor Control Board to establish programs to ensure that all liquor sold to the public on or after July 1, 2003, is in containers for which a deposit is charged at the time of sale and refunded on the return of the container.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council is authorized to make regulations governing the establishment and operation of these programs.

ONTARIO WATER RESOURCES
AMENDMENT ACT (WATER SOURCE
PROTECTION), 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES
RESSOURCES EN EAU DE L'ONTARIO
(PROTECTION DES SOURCES
D'ALIMENTATION EN EAU)

Mrs Dombrowsky moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act with respect to water source protection / Projet de loi 127, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario en ce qui concerne la protection des sources d'alimentation en eau.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): This bill amends the Ontario Water Resources Act with regard to the availability and conservation of Ontario water resources.

Specifically, the bill requires the director to consider the Minister of the Environment's statement of environmental values when making any decision under the act. The bill also requires that municipalities and conservation authorities are notified of applications to take water that, if granted, may affect their water sources or supplies.

MOTIONS

HOUSE Sittings

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I ask consent to move both of these motions for night sittings at the same time.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? No.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You can't blame a guy for trying. I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm until 9:30 pm on Monday, June 24, 2002, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1357 to 1402.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic
Amott, Ted

Elliott, Brenda
Flaherty, Jim

Mushinski, Marilyn
Newman, Dan

Baird, John R.	Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bartolucci, Rick	Gill, Raminder	Parsons, Emie
Beaubien, Marcel	Hardeman, Emie	Patten, Richard
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hudak, Tim	Peters, Steve
Boyer, Claudette	Johns, Helen	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Bert	Pupatello, Sandra
Brown, Michael A.	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Clement, Tony	Levac, David	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Martinik, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Maves, Bart	Stockwell, Chris
Cordiano, Joseph	Mazzilli, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cunningham, Dianne	McDonald, AL	Tsubouchi, David H.
Curling, Alvin	McGuinity, Dalton	Tumblin, David
DeFaria, Carl	McLeod, Lyn	Wilson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Wood, Bob
Duncan, Dwight	Molinari, Tina R.	Young, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	Martin, Tony
Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley	Prue, Michael

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 71; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Tuesday, June 25, 2002, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1405 to 1410.

The Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia
Amott, Ted	Flaherty, Jim	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Galt, Doug	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Gill, Raminder	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hardeman, Emie	Parsons, Emie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hastings, John	Patten, Richard
Boyer, Claudette	Hudak, Tim	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Johns, Helen	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Johnson, Bert	Pupatello, Sandra
Bryant, Michael	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Kwinter, Monte	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Coburn, Brian	Levac, David	Spina, Joseph
Colle, Mike	Martinik, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Cordiano, Joseph	Maves, Bart	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Mazzilli, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Curling, Alvin	McDonald, AL	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	McGuinity, Dalton	Tumblin, David

Di Cocco, Caroline
Dombrowsky, Leona
Duncan, Dwight
Dunlop, Garfield

McLeod, Lyn
McMeekin, Ted
Miller, Norm
Molinari, Tina R.

Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Hampton, Howard
Kormos, Peter

Marchese, Rosario
Martin, Tony

Prue, Michael

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 72; the nays are 5.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

COMMITTEE Sittings

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I move that standing order 87 respecting notice of committee hearings be suspended for consideration of Bill Pr10 by the standing committee on regulations and private bills on Wednesday, June 26, 2002.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

VISITORS

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to introduce the parents' council and the chair, Trudy Griffiths. They're in the audience today in the gallery.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to ask for unanimous consent to pass third reading of Bill 77, the Adoption Disclosure Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question today is for the Deputy Premier. There is a growing consensus on the need for a new deal for our cities. Cities in Ontario are struggling, particularly the city of Toronto. It is faltering. It is having a great deal of difficulty struggling with its responsibilities: housing, public transit and infrastructure generally.

I believe it's time to rethink our relationship with our cities, particularly the city of Toronto, and to put them on a sustainable footing to ensure they reach their potential and can continue to serve us in their very important capacity as Ontario's economic engine.

My question to you is, given this growing consensus, can you tell me why the Eves government has put forging a new deal with municipalities on the back burner?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I would refer that to the associate minister.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I want to say that the new deal for cities in Ontario—I've been following the news in the last few months on all the working groups that are working toward coming up with some solutions. I intend to attend the summit that's coming up on Wednesday and listen to all those who are participating in that summit. Certainly we, as a government, are committed to recognizing what the cities are requesting—the whole issue of governance and the issue of financing—and I'm pleased to be able to consult with a number of stakeholders to work on some solutions.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Associate Minister, I can tell you that the people of Toronto are not going to take a great deal of comfort in the knowledge that you are going to listen at a conference. I think it's time to move forward, and I have a very specific proposal for you.

Some of the best work that was recently done in this Legislature was by a select committee dealing with energy matters. I thought that was a very productive and useful exercise, notwithstanding what some government members might think. I think we should be establishing a select committee to do work over the course of the summer and report to this Legislature when we resume sitting, presumably in October, to carefully consider how we might establish a new and better working relationship with our cities, and especially the city of Toronto. I ask you to consider this, Madam Minister.

Hon Mrs Molinari: The government agrees that continued competitiveness of its urban centres, such as Toronto and Ottawa, is important. We have a very keen interest in Toronto as a strong, healthy and vibrant centre.

We have taken a number of steps to strengthen the municipal sector. We have a memorandum of understanding with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that all the municipalities participated in. The government recognizes that well-administered, economically healthy municipalities are a significant part of Ontario's competitive edge, and an appropriate legislative environment that provides municipalities with the tools they require while simultaneously protecting public health and safety without creating red tape.

We are open to listening to all the consultation processes that are coming about, and we are taking advice. Certainly the members of the opposition have the ability to give advice, and we will be listening to that too.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, if you cannot make this commitment here today, then I ask you undertake to approach the Premier with this request. It's important to understand that if Toronto, for example, is going to move beyond surviving, so that it actually thrives and continues its important role for the entire province of Ontario, we need to strike a new deal with cities.

The United Way, the Toronto Board of Trade, economists at TD Canada Trust and the Royal Bank, the CD Howe Institute, the Conference Board of Canada, the

Federation of Canadian Municipalities and none other than Jane Jacobs herself are calling on your government to forge a new deal for our municipalities.

My request is very simple and, I think, very positive. I ask that you receive it in the spirit with which it is tendered. May I ask you again: could we not strike a select committee and enable representatives from all three parties to work together, report to this House in October and strike a new deal with our cities?

Hon Mrs Molinari: I'm not sure what part of the response the opposition doesn't understand. I said we will be listening. We'll be listening to the advice and the opinions of the opposition as well.

Let me be clear. When your federal cousins come through on their funding for health care for the province of Ontario, then we'll be able to make more commitments toward the cities. If the federal government is also interested in building vibrant cities, then please speak to your federal cousins and ensure they fulfill their commitment to health care funding in this province.

1420

FREEDOM OF HYDRO INFORMATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): It will take me a while to recover from that tongue-lashing, Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, on Friday, our Information and Privacy Commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, blew the whistle on your government on the matter of Hydro again. In 1998 she said it was essential that the new Hydro companies be subject to the freedom-of-information legislation. She said the same thing in 1999. She said the same thing in 2001. Then last Friday she said, "There are a number of amendments in Bill 58 that would seriously impinge on the public's right to scrutinize and seek information about the newly deregulated electricity market in Ontario." In effect, the privacy commissioner is saying that your consumer protection bill is really a consumer blindfold.

Why are you still trying to hide what is going on in our electricity market from taxpayers and ratepayers alike?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): That's not the case. The simple fact is this: we searched for a jurisdiction that would provide FOIs—freedom-of-information requests—for private corporations. We could not find one. I myself spoke with the privacy commissioner and asked if she could provide me with any examples of any jurisdiction in the world that would provide FOIs, freedom of informations, for private sector corporations. She couldn't provide me with that. I suggested to her that it was very difficult for us to attract industries to build generating stations to put power on the grid if all their personal and financial information, the sensitive stuff, would be allowed to be under freedom of information and then provided to all their competitors. She agreed that would be very difficult.

What you don't understand is that with the IMO going in there and getting all this information and the OEB adjudicating, in fact that is protection far better than any protection provided in jurisdictions.

So my question to you is, are you now telling this House you're in favour of having private sector companies fall under the freedom-of-information act and all that private sector information be allowed to go out to everybody in the world? If that's what you're saying, stand up and say it.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you would know that your spin has no basis in fact. Freedom-of-information legislation provides for a specific exemption when it comes to protecting information that could jeopardize trade secrets or law enforcement matters.

Isn't the whole idea here—and I'm sure you will agree with me on this—to inspire confidence in the public when it comes to what you are doing with Hydro? Listen to what Derek Cowbourne, the vice-president of market services over at the IMO, recently said:

"If this market is good—and we believe it is—then it must be seen to be good. At the IMO ... we keep the lights on.... But the public is concerned because people are in the dark—and when you're in the dark, you don't know if it's a light at the end of the tunnel or a train. If what we do is not seen to be good, it won't be trusted. If it seems closed to a few industry insiders because only industry people understand the language and grasp the issues and see the benefits, it won't be trusted. And if it isn't trusted, it won't move forward."

What I am saying to you is that if you want the market to move forward, it's important that it be trusted and it's very important there be transparency there. So I ask you again, why do you stand in the way of ensuring that the new system is transparent to ratepayers and taxpayers alike?

Hon Mr Stockwell: It's as transparent as any jurisdiction in the world. How much more comprehensive can it be? It is transparent to every jurisdiction in the world. There isn't one jurisdiction in the world that says private, confidential private company information should be subject to freedom of information. The IMO can go in there, gather the information, report to the Ontario Energy Board. They adjudicate and pass penalties and so on against those companies that aren't cooperating properly.

But if you're suggesting to me—and I wish you'd say it—that private sector companies should be subject to the freedom-of-information act, then say it. Nobody else anywhere in the world is saying that. Only you, Mr McGuinty, and this privacy commissioner; besides that, no one. Stand up and tell me that private sector corporations should now be subject to the freedom-of-information act and then try to attract companies to Ontario where they would be laid bare, all financial information for all their competitors to see.

Mr McGuinty: If I have to choose between you and the privacy commissioner in terms of who's going to stand up for ratepayers and taxpayers and ensure there's

transparency, I'm with the privacy commissioner. It's as simple as that.

I say to you again, Mr Minister, there is provision in the freedom-of-information legislation to protect against revealing trade secrets and the like. You tell me this has been done nowhere else in the world. I don't care. Why aren't you so ambitious to ensure that we have something better here in Ontario? Why can't you draw upon the California experience? One of the things that commentators expert in these matters have said was that because of the lack of transparency, people were able to game the markets. Why is it that you continue to stand in the way of ensuring there is transparency for taxpayers and ratepayers?

Hon Mr Stockwell: How they gamed the market was, they didn't have the teeth for the inspection of the IMO and they didn't have the teeth or the jurisdiction of the Ontario Energy Board. That's how they gamed the market. It didn't work that way in Texas, Britain and other areas because they had a tough regulation, such as we have, at the IMO and the OEB.

Mr McGuinty: I don't care.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You don't care. Of course you don't care. You don't care if companies come here. You don't care if there's prosperity. You don't care if there are jobs. You're like your friend over here from St Catharines. You're only satisfied when everybody's on welfare, everybody's on the dole and everybody works for the government.

We care. I'm not apologizing for caring about that. It's a fact of life that this government wants prosperity. If you want to do that, stand up and say it, because I'm telling you for a fact, no jurisdiction has it. There's good reason why nobody has it. The rhetoric, bafflegab and yadda yadda you put on here isn't worth the powder to blow it to Hades.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is also to the Minister of Energy. Minister, I suggest you pay careful attention to what the privacy commissioner is saying, because she says the problem is at the IMO. You want to focus this on private corporations. She points out that the IMO is a creation of your government. The IMO is charged with ensuring that price-fixing doesn't happen, it's charged with ensuring that consumers are protected, yet the IMO wants to have a blanket over the information. The IMO wants to keep consumers in the dark. The question is this: do you support the IMO keeping the privacy commissioner and consumers in the dark? If so, why are you more interested in protecting the next Enron in Ontario rather than protecting the public?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The Leader of the Opposition quoted an employee at the IMO saying, "No, this information should be public." What are you talking about? He's quoting guys from the IMO saying, "Yes, it should be public information." You're saying to me the IMO doesn't want to make it public information. I know you meet before question period. Get your strategy straight.

I say through you, Mr Speaker, to the leader of the third party, the fact is this: there isn't a jurisdiction that does this. Why don't they do it? Think about it. Private companies set their shops up in Ontario. They're subject to FOI. If they're subject to FOI, all their trade secrets, all their financial information is available to anyone in the world, and that would put them at an unfair disadvantage. We wouldn't be able to attract people under those terms and conditions, because no jurisdiction allows this.

Interjections.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): Wrong, wrong.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The member for St Paul's is saying, "Wrong." I know the member for St Catharines is blustering, blathering away. If there's a jurisdiction that does allow this, give me the name of the jurisdiction that allows FOIs on private corporations.

1430

Mr Hampton: This is not about FOIs to private corporations, and you know it. This about the information commissioner being able to look at those files at the IMO, being able to determine if the IMO is in fact covering up for corporate friends of this government.

You asked for a jurisdiction that does this. After the energy blackouts in California, after the Enrons ripped off people to the tune of billions of dollars, this is what California now does to protect consumers. You can get this information off a Web site in California. You can go to the Web site and you can find out which private electricity-generating corporation has shut down. You can even find out why they've shut down. You can find out which ones are operating.

Minister, I think that if you want to promote an electricity market in Ontario, you ought to be protecting the consumers rather than your corporate friends. Will you do that?

Hon Mr Stockwell: You're saying it's all about the IMO. Well, the IMO gathers that information, and if the IMO gathers that information from private corporations and they are "FOI-able," then all that financial information about these companies would be under the FOI.

I can only say our scan indicates that we can't find a jurisdiction that subjects their IMO or independent electricity system to freedom-of-information legislation. It has nothing to do with protecting anybody. It has to do with this: private corporations are not subject to freedom of information simply because the information they have is germane to their business, and if their competitors got it, it would put them at a competitive disadvantage. That's not anything to do with protectionism at all; it has to do with fair market practices. So besides us, there is not a jurisdiction that would release this information, that would gather this information under the privacy commissioner. It would put us at a disadvantage and it would be a mindless act in order to perpetrate some myth that somehow they're not being monitored.

Mr Hampton: Enron was a myth? This is the New York Times, June 23, 2002: "Former Officials Say Enron Hid" \$1.5 billion in ripoff gains from people in Cali-

fornia. After this happened, California said, "The public deserves to know more information. We have to be concerned with protecting the public." The only Minister of Energy I can find anywhere who is still concerned with protecting the Enrons is you. Everybody else out there is concerned to make sure Enron doesn't happen again.

So I repeat my question. Why is it, Minister, that you want to put a wet blanket on information which might indicate that somebody is manipulating the market, that somebody is scamming consumers, that someone is creating an artificial electricity shortage? Why are you so committed to looking after the interests of your corporate friends, the next Enron, rather than protecting the consumers of Ontario?

Hon Mr Stockwell: What California did after that was in fact toughen up their electricity monitoring operators and their Ontario Energy Board. Why?

Mr Hampton: It ended deregulation.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Go ahead. Keep going. It ended—

Mr Hampton: It ended deregulation.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, right, because a lefty was trying to operate it, and we all know lefties can't operate a private sector operator. So the fact of the matter is this: they toughened up their IMO and their Ontario Energy Board because that's the kind of legislation we put in place in order for the IMO and the OEB—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The minister has the floor.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's the kind of legislation we put in place for the IMO to monitor the situation, the OEB to check on it.

What California did was they adopted our legislation and put it in place to ensure it can't happen. The only wet blanket I want to throw on here has nothing to do with an issue, has nothing to do with the IMO, has nothing to do with the OEB. The only wet blanket that needs to be thrown here is on something else.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Minister of Labour. I would just say to the Minister of Energy that in California they put this information on the Web so people can find it.

My question to the Minister of Labour is this: your government's laws that promote scabs in the workplace have caused a situation at the Chatham Navistar plant to go from bad to horrendous. This morning, even as police continued to turn away scabs in the interests of safety, an SUV driven by a security firm hired by Navistar to get scabs into the plant struck six people who were legally picketing. Four of those people were taken to hospital. One was badly scraped up from being dragged 40 feet by the SUV, one had a broken leg and one is in critical condition and has been airlifted to the London's University Hospital with internal injuries and tire marks on his

stomach. The police have since charged the driver of the SUV.

Your government's legislation allows scabs into workplaces. It allows companies like this to promote this kind of thing on the picket line. So my questions are these: when are you going to take responsibility for the situation you have caused; will you commit today to step in and call off the strikebreaking dogs, or do you think it's appropriate for people who are legally exercising their right of association to be run over on a picket line?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): We are definitely sorry to hear about the unfortunate accident that occurred this morning down in Chatham.

Our legislation is balanced. The union has the right to withdraw their services during a strike. The company has the right to continue operating. That's the way the law is written; that's what is on the books currently in Ontario. While the leader of the third party over there wants to make political hay out of this, we on this side have been in contact with both parties, trying to get both parties back to the collective bargaining table, where this particular labour dispute will be resolved.

Mr Hampton: Navistar has rejected your government's offer of mediation. They have refused to come to the table to bargain. Instead, they're going to get SUVs and hire strikebreakers to run at the picket line. You keep telling people that under your legislation 95% of labour disputes are resolved without a strike. Before your legislation, 97% of collective bargaining situations were handled at the bargaining table. What has happened since your legislation is that you've put these kinds of professional strikebreaking companies back in business. That's what you've done. This was a company that was hired by Navistar to get scabs into the plant. Six people who are legally exercising their constitutionally protected right, freedom of associating, are run down, and all you can say is, "This is a balanced situation" that your government is creating. Create some balance. Take these companies out of business. Reintroduce legislation which says scabs are not welcome in Ontario. That's how you have balance, when you do that.

Hon Mr Clark: Again, to the leader of the third party, the government of Ontario abhors violence of any type. Nothing that is going on anywhere could condone the type of violence that has occurred. The police department will investigate the violence and they'll lay charges that are appropriate. The reality is here. We're working to resolve the labour dispute. We want both sides at the table—collective bargaining in good faith. That's what we want.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Clark: You can continue to raise your voice, you can continue to yell and scream, you can continue to incite this type of nonsense, but on this side of the House we're interested in collective bargaining. We want the company and the labour group to sit down at the same table and come up with an agreement. We want to eliminate this labour dispute and get everyone back to work. We're not interested in the political rhetoric that

you have, sir. We're interested in solving a labour dispute. That's why I'm involved; that's why we're encouraging both parties back to the table.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education. Last Friday a Superior Court of Justice of Ontario decision exposes just how much influence you have over closing schools across the province. The decision voids the board's decision to shut down 10 schools here in Toronto.

Your funding formula requires school boards to sacrifice pupil needs in one area by shutting down schools to help pupils in a completely different area in order to build new schools. The implication, Minister, is that the school board in question is no longer closing schools to satisfy you. Now they're no longer eligible to get your funding to build new schools.

According to the Toronto Catholic school board, the bounty to take away neighbourhood schools from 3,000 children is about \$3.8 million this year. My question to you, Minister, is, are you going to take away the \$3.8 million you paid to the Toronto Catholic board for new schools now that the court has overturned the decision to close the schools and make the board eligible?

1440

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): As the member full well knows, it's up to the Toronto board to make the decisions regarding school closings, and obviously they're going to have to make sure they abide by the decision.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, you're getting very famous for not giving a direct answer. The question is very simple. Your rules say there's a deadline of December 31. The judges have said the schools cannot close. Either you're going to penalize the board by taking the \$3.8 million away from them, or you're going to penalize the students by getting involved in some process to still close these schools.

Henry Gluch is here. He's one of the parents who spent a lot of their own money going to court because of your flawed provincial school closing policy. I think you owe it to all those parents around the province, many of whom are here visiting this House looking for you to give a direct answer. Minister, are you prepared to use your discretion to help these schools survive, to not see something bad happen for the students or for the school board? In other words, are you prepared to let the board keep the \$3.8 million? Are you prepared, in fact, to implement the school closing moratorium that our leader, Dalton McGuinty, proposed, until your flawed funding formula is reviewed? That's the right answer. I'd like you to stand up in the House and tell us exactly what you're going to do.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member opposite seems to forget that throughout the years there have been closings of both public and Catholic schools. In fact, I would like to remind the member that between 1985 and 1990,

during the Liberal tax-and-spend era, there were 37 schools closed in the city of Toronto.

I'm not criticizing the Liberals for school closures, because obviously these decisions need to be made by local boards. But what I want to make clear that it is not the policies of today that lead to school closures. School closures have always been a fact of life. However, it is important that the school board go through the appropriate consultation process with the community groups, with the taxpayers and all those involved in making their decisions.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Culture. Three weeks ago in this House, you announced our government's joint investment with the federal government of \$233 million into the greater Toronto area—too bad George Smitherman isn't here to hear this—to support progressive building improvement projects for seven cultural institutions. I understand that just last Wednesday the Canadian Opera Company held a press conference to announce the naming donor for the new opera house. Minister, I wonder if you could tell this House how this excellent example of public-private partnership, coming together with both the province and the federal government, will result in a dream that finally will be realized.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): The member for Scarborough Centre is quite right. About three weeks ago Premier Eves was able to announce along with Prime Minister Chrétien, a huge investment into the culture community in the city of Toronto. That was received with great appreciation by maestro Richard Bradshaw and also the chair of the opera house, Arthur Sache.

The province's commitment is \$31 million worth of land. That's matched by the federal government in the amount of \$25 million in cash to enable the opera house to continue. I was quite privileged last week to be at the naming announcement. That, of course, is Isadore Sharp with Four Seasons. He has committed \$20 million toward the opera house. This is a great indication of how the public and the private sectors can work together to benefit the cultural community in the city of Toronto—and not simply Toronto but right across the province of Ontario.

Ms Mushinski: We know the enormous contribution and value that the arts and culture section bring to our society and our economy, and there's no doubt that government and private partner funding make all the difference to the ultimate success of large-scale capital projects like those announced under the SuperBuild initiative.

Minister, we also know the importance of revitalizing these exciting arts and cultural buildings to keep pace with other world-class venues or simply to expand to meet the current needs of displaying, storing and pro-

curing the many treasures and artifacts of our historical past. Will you please share with this House the current status of the other SuperBuild initiatives?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Speaker, I would be remiss as the Minister of Culture if I didn't recognize a couple of distinguished guests in the gallery: Mr Elliott Chang, the director general of the Taipei economic and cultural office in Toronto, and Dr Michael Tsai, who is the deputy representative at the Taipei economic and cultural office.

Once again, I thank the member for Scarborough Centre. This announcement was received with great gratitude from the cultural community, whether it was the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario or the National Ballet School.

I will quote Mr Jack Cockwell. Jack, of course, is the chairman of the Royal Ontario Museum. He said, "With \$60 million recently committed to phase one of Renaissance ROM by the provincial SuperBuild initiative and the federal Canada-Ontario infrastructure program and initial private sector commitments, the Royal Ontario Museum is already halfway to completing the funding requirements for phase one of this two-phase project."

The government commitment clearly has assisted these cultural institutions in going to the private sector to create a great partnership for the benefit of the city of Toronto.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education. In 1997, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board received \$556 million in funding. Nearly six years later, they're receiving \$504 million from the province toward a \$544-million planned budget. Their administrative line is 2.2%, well below the 3% guideline that your funding formula provides. They have cut \$10 million out of this year's budget alone, and they've depleted all of their reserves. They're in a heck of a mess—and don't tell me about Dr Rozanski's effort to look at the funding formula, because anybody with half a brain in two hours could figure out the problem with the funding formula with five phone calls.

Your officials held one meeting with the board and as of this morning the board has heard nothing from the ministry. I wrote to you on June 5 asking you to respond. I'm asking you now, Minister, will you appoint an investigator to review the board's books and their budget plan for the year 2002-03?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): In response to the question from the member, who has indeed discussed this issue with me, we are endeavouring to work with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. Their budget this year is a projected \$504 million. That is an increase of 2.3% over last year and the board's enrolment has increased by only 1.1%.

We continue to want to work with the Ottawa-Carleton board in order to ensure that the budget there

can be balanced. I know that the administration—and I think this is important to note—has presented the board with a balanced budget. They have provided the opportunity for the board to support that budget.

Mr Patten: The administration are staff, and staff look to Queen's Park for directions from the ministry. The trustees look to the people of Ottawa and the parents of the kids for what they want for quality education. So it's quite a different ballgame.

There was a poll done—and you say you worked with the board. Nobody is working with the board, by the way. You have a committee that's been working with the Toronto board for the last three weeks. If you're not around the corner or down the street, I guess you don't get attention. This is the government of Ontario, not the government of Toronto, I would remind you. Anybody outside of the Toronto always gets short shrift.

There was a recent Decima poll that showed that 77% of respondents support increased provincial funding to make up for the identified \$32-million shortfall. I tell you, if there was an election tomorrow, combining this issue with the CHEO issue, you'd be lucky to have one member of the Progressive Conservative Party in the Ottawa area.

I ask you, Minister, will you really work with the board, not just say you're working with the board? Nothing has happened. Will you work with them to arrive at a balanced budget?

1450

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think the member has made one very important point: that every school board in Ontario deserves the same type of attention, whether they're in Toronto, down in Windsor, up in Thunder Bay or in Ottawa, and I would certainly agree. It remains a difficult decision every year for trustees to balance their budget.

I can assure the member opposite that we continue to look to working with the Ottawa board. I hope they're doing what other boards are doing; that is, continuing to look at options as to how the budget can be balanced. I know that administrators in other boards are taking a look at how it can be done. As I say, I understand the administration in Ottawa has presented a balanced budget, but unfortunately the trustees did select not to adopt that budget.

CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Would you please update Ontarians on the government's activities and enforcement under the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act to protect construction jobs in eastern Ontario?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): Our government remains committed to the elimination of inter-provincial trade and labour mobility barriers. That is why we redesignated Quebec under the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act. Without that designation, construction workers and contractors from Quebec are able to work

here and do business freely in Ontario. At the same time, Quebec continues to impose significant barriers to Ontario companies doing business in Quebec. Until these barriers are removed, the measures will remain in place and will be vigorously enforced.

As to the enforcement issue, at the present time there are 68 inspectors from various ministries appointed to enforce the act. Many of these inspectors are appointed under other legislation to allow enforcement of construction-related compliance issues. This is done to ensure all contractors are playing by the same rules and have a level playing field in Ontario.

Mr Gill: Minister, I'm confident that strong enforcement will go a long way in protecting construction jobs in eastern Ontario. Could you please inform the House on the results of the enforcement activities?

Hon Mr Clark: Most construction contracts were in effect before March 9, 2002, the date Quebec was redesignated, and the provisions of the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act do not apply. Quebec contractors and construction workers working on post-March 9 contracts are required to register with the jobs protection office.

During our inspections, whenever workers and contractors are found to be working without registration, they are directed to register with the JPO. This has proven to be very effective. As of May 31, the JPO has registered 122 contractors and 907 workers since the act was reimposed on Quebec on March 9. The JPO has also collected in excess of \$120,000 in registration fees. In addition, the office has received more than 2,000 phone calls regarding compliance requirements.

Under other statutes, numerous charges have been laid. This type of inspection activity takes place to ensure that all contractors are playing by the same rules and there is a level playing field for all.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Health. Your government is turning its back on thousands of autistic children in this province. Recent numbers from OHIP show that one in 500 Ontario children is diagnosed with autism. We now have a proven treatment for this neurological illness, known as intensive behavioural intervention, but the vast majority of these children will never get the treatment they need. Your government funds IBI treatment as a disability service through the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services. This medically necessary treatment should be funded through OHIP. Will you commit today to providing children with the medically necessary treatment they need, and will you fully fund IBI treatment to all children who need it regardless of their age?

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before the minister answers the question, I would tell all our friends in the gallery that it is not the practice for the gallery to clap. I would ask that they refrain from clapping. I know they probably didn't know that, but I'd ask them to please refrain.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'll refer the question to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague in the third party for the question. Our government cares deeply about the needs of children with autism. We want to give them our support to make sure they reach their full potential. That is why we have put a very high priority on providing services for children in this province.

We are the first government in Ontario ever to offer an intensive treatment service for children with autism. That program is directed to children ages two to five. We began in 1999 with a \$5-million commitment and we have increased that commitment eightfold, to now \$39 million. We allocate almost all of that funding directly to service, but we do spend some on training, because there is not only an Ontario shortage but an international shortage of specialists to provide this service. It's very new. It's designed in response to the most recent research on the best treatment available and designed for autistic children. We care deeply and we are working to provide the very best service possible.

Ms Martel: My supplementary is for the Minister of Health, because IBI should be covered as medically necessary treatment and should be funded by OHIP. We have dozens and dozens of families in the gallery today who represent just a small fraction of the families who are on waiting lists now for IBI treatment in Ontario. Your government only funds this treatment until age six. Without a change in the way IBI is funded, many of these children will turn six and will never receive the treatment they need. Many more will start to get treatment, will turn six and will have their treatment cancelled. This is about medically necessary services being provided by OHIP. Will you, I ask you again, stop turning your back on these families and fund IBI treatment as a medically necessary service through OHIP?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I thank my colleague for the question. Many of us come to this place as parents. Our commitment to children, not only our own but children around this province, is deep. We are providing a service that had not been offered in Ontario until 1999 and, as I said, we've increased our investment in this very specific service eightfold. I come here as a legislator and as a policy-maker. I am not a researcher. I am not a scientist. I am not a practitioner. We act on the best advice given to us by practitioners and scientists in the field. That is why the program is designed for pre-six. We do our best to provide the very best service to give children with autism the best potential for their life. We do that diligently and with the best advice possible.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Labour. I want to return to the issue of the Navistar CAW strike in Chatham. I see nothing but bad news on the horizon with respect to this

issue. I feel that you have a responsibility, that your government has a responsibility, to do whatever you can to allow cooler heads to prevail and to ensure that this matter is resolved at the earliest possible opportunity, in a peaceful manner.

Having been warned that this might happen, can you inform this House what specific steps you took to try to prevent this kind of tragedy? And, having failed, what steps are you now taking to prevent it from happening again?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I thank the leader of the loyal opposition for his question. As I stated to this House on Thursday, we were already in touch with the labour leader, Buzz Hargrove, Thursday morning to discuss what was happening. Friday morning I was in touch with Tom Hennigan from Navistar. We've been working with both parties, encouraging them to get back to the table. We're not at liberty to reveal any more details about it, sir, but the reality is that we're working hard, encouraging them to get back to the collective bargaining table. As the leader of the loyal opposition would agree, I would think that this will be resolved at the bargaining table.

Mr McGuinty: Everybody hopes it will be resolved as soon as possible at the bargaining table, but there are certain things here which are painfully predictable. We understand now that there are going to be thousands of CAW workers coming to Chatham. The police are going to have some real challenges before them. I think you have a responsibility to involve yourself in this matter. If you cannot do so, if you feel that the Premier should be doing so, then the Premier himself should be involving himself in this matter, if for no other reason than to ensure that no more people are injured. It is not enough now, understanding the facts, knowing that thousands are about to collect in Chatham, to simply say, "We're hoping that things will be worked out on their own."

I'm asking you specifically what you're going to do now, understanding these facts, to ensure that no further injuries take place and that this matter truly does come to a peaceful resolution.

1500

Hon Mr Clark: Leadership is about taking the initiative, and that's what I did on Thursday, sir. We responded to both parties that are in dispute. We've spoken with the Navistar people. We continue to speak with the labour leaders. I spoke with Mr Hargrove again this morning. We have more phone calls into the company.

In labour relations, the reality is that you have to encourage both parties back to the table. I would encourage you, as the leader of the loyal opposition, and the leader for the third party to encourage all the people who are involved not to resort to attempts of violence. This will be resolved at the bargaining table, not through any act of violence. Every parliamentarian in this House should be standing up and stating that there is no excuse that would condone any of the violence that has occurred from any side of the party. The reality is that they will only resolve this matter through collective bargaining at the table.

The leadership was coming from us. We already took that step. You're late to the draw. We were already heavily involved.

BUILDING CODE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the associate minister responsible for rural affairs. Over the weekend I had the opportunity to read a very interesting article in the Toronto Star, written by Sheldon Libfeld, the president of the Greater Toronto Homebuilders' Association, in which he spoke about Bill 124, An Act to improve public safety and to increase efficiency in building code enforcement. It was very gratifying to see such a complimentary article in the Liberal Star about the Ernie Eves government.

What kinds of benefits will the many different building organizations see once this bill becomes law?

Hon Brian Coburn (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the hard-working honourable member from Northumberland for the question.

The legislation is based on recommendations from the Building Regulatory Reform Advisory Group. I want to thank all the individuals who participated in that. In my former role as parliamentary assistant of municipal affairs, I had an opportunity to work with them. They were regulators from the building profession, builders, consumers' groups and others who were interested in streamlining and improving the building regulatory process.

They worked together and developed the report entitled Knowledge, Accountability and Streamlining: Cornerstones for a New Building Regulatory System in Ontario. It builds on three cornerstones: public safety, streamlining and accountability. There are benefits all the way through this, certainly, not only for those in the building community, where it saves time and reduces duplication, but for municipalities that do not necessarily have the ability with all the expertise at hand. The bottom line for the consumer is that in terms of providing that efficiency, it saves dollars at the end.

Mr Galt: Minister, thank you for your genuine interest in rural affairs, both with OMAFRA and now with the Ministry of Housing. I'm pleased to see that our government has worked with so many different groups in drafting this legislation. Actually, the extensive consultation is a hallmark of our government—both the Harris government and the Eves government.

You'd be interested to know that the mayor of Port Hope recently phoned, supporting this legislation and wanting to ensure its speedy passage.

During the debate last week, I remember hearing the opposition members rail away and ramble on about how we're privatizing everything. They also spoke about the concerns surrounding the registered code agencies. Could you please clarify what this bill will actually do in regard to the registered code agencies and what it will mean to new homebuyers, particularly in Northumberland?

Hon Mr Coburn: First off, we're not imposing a regime of privatization. What we are doing is providing

choice for municipalities and certainly for the building industry, a choice that provides more efficiency and streamlines the approvals process.

Under the proposed legislation, it's up to the municipality to be able to make that decision with respect to registered code agencies. There are some municipalities that don't have the luxury of having all the expertise on staff and the knowledge to be able to deal with the building code.

In small-town Ontario, in some areas, it's much more efficient to have registered code agencies where those individuals and those groups are knowledgeable in the building code so they can perform in an efficient and more cost-effective manner for the municipality.

ONTARIO SUPERBUILD CORP

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I have a question for the Deputy Premier, and it pertains to SuperBuild. Minister, as you are well aware, SuperBuild Corp was created in December 1999, almost three years ago. According to SuperBuild's 2000-01 annual report, almost \$7 billion of capital was committed by the end of the 2001 fiscal year; \$7 billion of taxpayers' money. Given that this is an enormous sum of money, could the minister today table the audited financial statements for SuperBuild Corp?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I will certainly pass on and indicate you've made that request to the Minister of Finance.

Mr Cordiano: SuperBuild has been operational now for almost three years. In that time, you've committed \$7 billion of taxpayers' money, and yet you can stand before this House and tell us there are no statements, there is no accountability for \$7 billion of taxpayers' money. You're not able to produce an audited financial statement.

Well, Minister, let me tell you something: by not producing an audited financial statement, you have a total disregard for the taxpayers of this province. Worse than that, you have actually broken the law, because you are in violation of sections 14 and 15 of the Development Corporations Act.

My question to you is this: given that you have failed to comply with your legal obligations, will you make available today to the Provincial Auditor any financial data pertaining to SuperBuild so that the Provincial Auditor can conduct a value-for-money audit in order to ensure that the taxpayers of this province are fully protected? Will you do that today, Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think the member is somewhat misinformed about SuperBuild. SuperBuild, as you know, is publicly accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario. There is a very transparent, fair process in place for approving all of the projects through cabinet. I want to tell you the information about the 3,000-plus projects that have been approved by SuperBuild is publicly and readily available on the Web site on a region-by-region basis. In fact, it's not \$7 billion, it's actually \$13 billion that has been committed to projects across Ontario. These

are investments in health care, in post-secondary, water, infrastructure, sport, culture. It's all readily available, and the information is there.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. The 2000 Ontario Road Safety Annual Report tabled last week in this Legislature is certainly good news for Ontario. It demonstrates that, for the second straight year, Ontario has the safest roads in Canada and the second safest in North America.

Although cars used across North America are being built safer, many with air bags, anti-lock braking systems and other safety features that have been credited with saving lives, Ontario's safety record has improved relative to other jurisdictions. Ontario has improved from a ranking of eighth place in North America in 1994 to our current ranking of second place. What initiatives has this government put in place to help achieve this very important result?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): We are indeed very proud of the ORSAR because it basically puts to rest the image that this government and past governments didn't care about road safety. This report is a tremendous endorsement of this government's past steps to improve road safety in this province, including improved commercial vehicle safety, enforcement and inspection programs, mandatory remedial measures, a program for drinking drivers, vehicle impoundment programs, increased fines for many offences, longer suspension periods for convicted drinking drivers and the ignition interlock program. In addition to all those, this government has invested huge amounts of money in highway infrastructure that has made our roads much safer.

1510

Mr Dunlop: While enhancing the safety of Ontario's roads and improving our record relative to other jurisdictions is a significant and commemorative achievement, it provides little comfort to those who have lost a friend or loved one in a road crash. Clearly the loss of even one life is one too many.

As you have outlined, the government has made many road safety advances to date. But we all know more work must be done. Minister, how do you propose to further enhance road safety in Ontario and continue to reduce the loss of life on our roads and highways?

Hon Mr Sterling: I'd like to thank Garfield Dunlop in particular, because of his introduction of a private member's bill in this House to deal with the ignition interlock program. It's thanks to his leadership that we have yet another program to deal with drinking and driving.

In addition to ORSAR, which talked about safety in general, last week MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, also issued their report and put Ontario at the top of all the provinces in terms of attacking drunk driving. Approximately 26% or 27% of fatal collisions in

the year 2000 involved drinking and driving. This is not satisfactory. We will continue to make our laws tougher. We'll deal with the enforcement of these offences in a tough manner.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Two weeks ago, your government showed its lack of commitment to people with disabilities in this province. You demonstrated once again that you don't care that disabled people living on the Ontario disability support program are being forced to live well below the poverty line.

Today the Ombudsman released his annual report, stating that when it comes to providing medically necessary travel costs, your treatment of people on ODSP is unfair. People on ODSP would need an increase of between \$1,536 and \$7,211, depending on where they live, just to reach the poverty line. Minister, will you commit today to increasing benefits to people on the Ontario disability support program?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): In the question, my colleague across the way forgot to mention a couple of things. He forgot to mention that it was not his government that removed individuals who suffered with disabilities from the welfare rolls; in fact it was our government that finally took them off the welfare rolls. He also forgot to mention that while he was in government he and his government did not enact an *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*; it was our government that introduced an *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, the first one in Canada.

When my colleague asks questions about disability benefit levels, does he recognize that in Ontario those who are on a disability pension have the highest disability benefit level in Canada, in fact \$100 more than the nearest benefit level, in British Columbia?

Mr Martin: While we're talking about sharing records here, your government cut support for people on welfare by 22%, and you haven't given people on ODSP across this province one cent's increase since you came to power.

You talked last week about carrying on a review of pensions for people on disability. Well, Minister, I'm here to say to you that you don't need that review, because we already have the information you need. The poverty line for people living in cities is \$18,371. A single person on ODSP gets a maximum of \$11,160 a year. That's \$7,211 below the poverty line. That's your track record. You don't need a review to know they're not receiving enough money. What kind of government is yours that would sentence people with disabilities to a lifetime of abject poverty?

Minister, I'll ask you again: will you commit today to increasing the benefits for people on the Ontario disability support program?

Hon Mrs Elliott: To my colleague across the way I say, ours is the government that took disabled people off the welfare rolls, something you did not do. Ours is the government that introduced the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, something you did not do. Ours is the government that removed the label "permanently unemployable" from people who have disabilities in the province of Ontario. Ours is the one that increased the amount of earnings a family can keep without penalty. We raised the assets. Our commitment to the disabled is unqualified, and we will continue to do all that we can to make life better for those disabled in this province.

VISITORS

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to welcome the students and teachers from Félix-Ricard, and I know they will enjoy this petition.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ernie Eves 2002 budget proves he'll say anything to hold on to power and is trying to run away from his own record;

"Whereas Ernie Eves's budget fails to deliver what Ontario families need, like a moratorium on school closures and a real cap on class sizes in the early years;

"Whereas the private school tax voucher should be cancelled, not delayed, and that money put into public classrooms;

"Whereas the \$2.2-billion corporate tax giveaway should be cancelled, not delayed;

"Whereas Ontario families are looking for real, positive change and only Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party represent that change;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to tell Ernie Eves to put Ontario working families first and cancel the corporate tax cut and cancel the private school voucher."

Of course, I affix my signature to this petition, give it to Andrew to bring to the table, and wish Félix-Ricard a good two-day field trip.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I've got a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario will be considering a private member's bill that aims to amend the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases; and

"Whereas optometrists are highly trained and equipped with the knowledge and specialized instrumentation needed to effectively diagnose and treat certain eye problems; and

"Whereas extending the authority to prescribe TPAs to optometrists will help relieve the demands on ophthalmologists and physicians who currently have the exclusive domain for prescribing TPAs to optometry patients; and

"Whereas the bill introduced by New Democrat Peter Kormos (MPP—Niagara Centre) will ensure that patients receive prompt, timely, one-stop care where appropriate;

"Therefore I do support the bill proposing an amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases and I urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage of the bill."

That's signed by hundreds of people and is, of course, signed by me, and there are more coming.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I've got a petition here. It says:

"Whereas by eliminating the fifth year of high school the government of Ontario has created a double cohort of students; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has promised that there will be a space at a university or college for every willing and qualified student; and

"Whereas Ontario's universities and colleges have not received sufficient funding from the government of Ontario to accommodate these double cohort students; and

"Whereas the quality of education at Ontario's universities and colleges has been declining in recent years; and

"Whereas the double cohort students will add an additional strain on an already fragile university and college system;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: provide full funding for every new student entering Ontario's universities and colleges; provide additional funding to increase quality at Ontario's universities and colleges; provide targeted funding to colleges for skills and innovation; and increase the per student funding to the national average over the next five years."

I affix my signature. Jordan, will you please bring it to the desk.

1520

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I've got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many high school students in Ontario are outraged at the harshness of the new curriculum and have chosen to leave school in May of 2002;

"Inadequate funding made difficult the implementation of the new curriculum;

"High school students should not be used as forced labour in addition to the extra hours required for the new curriculum;

"There is inadequate funding for the double cohort year. Universities and colleges will have trouble providing room for all those students;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We demand that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students establish a funding model to correct the shortcomings in the system;

"Further be it resolved that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students make recommendations to help those students who have had to change their career paths due to the harshness of the new system;

"Further be it resolved that students are no longer to do compulsory volunteer work;

"Further be it resolved that adequate funding be given for the double cohort year."

Signed by Dylan Petrachenko and Lisa Furry, both of Welland, along with hundreds of others.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On behalf of the students of Herman Secondary School in my riding, I present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the secondary students of the city of Windsor believe that the new curriculum is poor because it makes classes too difficult and students are dropping out because their grades are going down;

"Whereas OAC has been taken away, leaving students to prepare themselves for post-secondary studies;

"Whereas students believe that adding grade 7 and 8 students to secondary school will overcrowd schools;

"Whereas students believe that the French immersion program should continue;

"Whereas there is a lack of funding for textbooks and other important educational resources;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that the Eves government review the policies adopted by Mike Harris and make the proper management and funding of education a priority."

As I have in the past, I'm proud to affix my signature to this petition.

AIR QUALITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Eves government's wholly owned Nanticoke generating station is North America's largest dirty coal-fired electricity-producing plant and Ontario's

largest producer of the chemicals and acid gases which contribute to deadly smog and acid rain; and

"Whereas the Nanticoke plant, which has more than doubled its dangerous emissions under the Conservative government, is now the worst air polluter in all of Canada, spewing out over five million kilotonnes of toxic chemicals each year, including many cancer-causing chemicals and mercury, a potent and dangerous neuro-toxin; and

"Whereas at least 13 Ontario municipalities and seven northeastern US states have expressed concerns that Ontario Power Generation's proposed cleanup plan for Nanticoke is inadequate in protecting the air quality and health and safety of their residents; and

"Whereas the Ontario Medical Association has stated that 1,900 Ontarians die prematurely each year and we pay \$1 billion annually in health-related costs as a result of air pollution; and

"Whereas because the Conservative government has lifted the moratorium on the sale of coal-fired power plants and has set a date for deregulation of electricity, the operator of the Nanticoke plant will likely stoke up production to maximize profits, which will only worsen the air quality in cities like Toronto, Hamilton, Welland, Niagara Falls and St Catharines;

"Be it resolved that the Ernie Eves government immediately order that the Nanticoke generating station be converted from dirty coal to cleaner-burning natural gas."

I affix my signature. I'm in complete agreement.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition to stop the closure of cardiac surgery services at CHEO.

"To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to close cardiac surgery services at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario;

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to centralize all cardiac services for children in Toronto;

"Whereas cardiac surgery at CHEO is an essential service for children in eastern Ontario;

"Whereas many children such as Shawn McCarty, the 'miracle boy,' would not have survived had the cardiac surgery services not been available in Ottawa;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the undersigned petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand that the Conservative government halt immediately its decision to close cardiac surgery services in Ottawa."

I affix my signature.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas people with disabilities who rely on Ontario disability support program payments are facing rising costs; and

"Whereas people unable to work because of serious disabilities have had no increase in support since 1995; and

"Whereas with loss of rent controls their rents have skyrocketed, placing huge financial strains on many ODSP recipients,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to bring fairness to the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, by amending it to provide for regulations requiring annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support programs."

I affix my signature to this petition.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralization of children's heart surgery in Toronto would force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and to ensure that top-quality accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

I affix my signature on this petition.

KIDNEY DISEASE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I want to thank a determined citizen in my riding, Lindsay Wells, for this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas kidney disease is a huge and growing problem in Canada; and

"Whereas real progress is being made in various ways of preventing and coping with kidney disease;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to encourage the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to explicitly include kidney research as one of the institutes in its system, to be named the Institute of Kidney and Urinary Tract Diseases."

I'm in full agreement and have affixed my signature to this petition.

I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Jordan to bring to the table.

1530

HYDRO ONE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400-series highway in the province to private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

This petition is signed by a number of residents from Highgate, Ridgetown and Chatham.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it's entitled "Listen: Our Hearing is Important!"

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris-Eves government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas the new Harris-Eves government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology services across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserviced areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the" Mike Harris-Ernie Eves "government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Conservative government hastily amalgamated Niagara's ambulance dispatch services into the Hamilton Central Ambulance Communication Centre;

"Whereas an independent review of Hamilton's Central Ambulance Communication Centre found several major shortcomings, including inexperienced dispatchers, high call volume and out-of-date equipment, hindering the dispatch of ambulances in Niagara and in other parts of the province;

"Whereas poor training of Central Ambulance Communication Centre dispatchers by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has led to improper emergency coding, resource misallocation and waste and increased wait times for those requiring ambulance services;

"Whereas the Central Ambulance Communication Centre dispatchers are handling 1,300 more calls a year than recommended by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"Whereas these shortcomings in ambulance service restructuring are putting lives at risk in Niagara, Hamilton and throughout the province;

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has been in possession of the independent review since October 31, 2001, which provides recommendations to greatly improve ambulance dispatch services in Niagara and Hamilton;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately act upon recommendations presented in the independent review of the Central Ambulance Communication Centre and eliminate the grievous imperfections which are placing our citizens at risk."

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has consistently underfunded public high schools; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Education has forced school boards to reduce services in order to balance their budget and

"Whereas these cuts will severely affect the education and future of the students of Ontario's public high schools; and

"Whereas these cuts will effectively put students and their education at risk;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take

immediate action to increase the funding to Ontario public high schools."

I'm in full support and will sign this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 86, An Act to rescue children trapped in the misery of prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation and to amend the Highway Traffic Act, when Bill 86 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The Attorney General has moved government notice of motion number 30. The Attorney General.

Hon Mr Young: At the outset, I'd like to take a moment, if I may, to comment upon a number of people who have, over the last short while, contributed greatly to the piece of legislation we are debating here today. I look across the floor to the member from Sudbury, Mr Bartolucci, who has tirelessly spoken out about the issue of children being exploited in various sexual trades, who has come to this Legislative Assembly with a number of excellent ideas, many of which are incorporated in the legislation in front of us here. Indeed, there are some other ideas that have come from other members. What we have here is a bill that I believe, in my respectful opinion, will improve the plight of children in Ontario, some children who are the most vulnerable. So I thank the honourable member opposite for being a champion of this issue and for bringing it forward. I look forward to hearing his comments later this day in the assembly.

I also want to reference Minister Flaherty, my predecessor in this role of Attorney General. Mr Flaherty tabled a bill very similar to the one I am speaking to today. He too spent a great deal of time and effort in relation to this very worthy cause, a cause that is very important to him. I know that by reason of our continued discussions relating to this. I thank him on behalf of the people of Ontario in anticipation of this very important piece of legislation being passed, which is of course my hope and subject to the will of the Legislature.

Sexually exploited children live in a shadowy nightmare world, far removed from the world that most of us in this Legislative Assembly, and, I dare say, most of

those individuals watching on TV, occupy. We are very lucky that we do not live within that world or anywhere close to that world. But every day, these young people—and I do mean young people, children 11 and 12 years old in some instances—are exposed to violence, they are exposed to drug abuse, they are exposed to rape, assault of various types, including murder, on some occasions. This all comes at the hands of adults. Without exception, it comes at the hands of adults, and it comes because there are adults in our community who perversely think that it is acceptable to exploit these young people in order to make a profit. Well, of course they are wrong. We in this Legislative Assembly are here today, I believe, to confirm that anyone who engages in that activity will suffer consequences related to paying any costs incurred to rehabilitate the young people we will rescue if this bill passes.

We are here to say, first and foremost, to those young people who find themselves trapped in this misery, who find themselves trapped in this cycle of despair, that there will be some hope. When we talk about young people who are trapped by these predators, trapped by these individuals who we historically have thought of as pimps standing on a street corner with a young woman nearby, when we think of that image nowadays, it is not entirely accurate or comprehensive. Indeed, the world of sexual exploitation unfortunately is much broader than it once was. The idea that it's only in downtown Toronto and it's only street prostitution that we have in this Legislative Assembly or children's aid workers or police have to confront is inaccurate; it's outdated. Sure, there are instances where young people are still on the street in big cities, no doubt. And there is no question there is a problem in the city of Toronto similar to the one I just described, but it goes much beyond that.

First of all, this is not just a problem for the city of Toronto. It happens in places like Hamilton, and it happens in places like Sudbury. It happens in places like Ottawa, and it happens in places like St Catharines. Police tell us that many young people flee smaller urban centres and small towns and rural areas and go to larger areas like Thunder Bay, Timmins or Kapuskasing, in some respects. They go to these areas often in order to avoid abusive situations, and they come to larger communities, whether it be communities like Kingston or communities like the city of Toronto.

Clearly this is a problem that involves the entire province, every part of the province. This bill, if it is passed by this Legislative Assembly, would allow for the police and children's aid workers to take action, actions that in the past they simply haven't been able to take, actions that will be motivated by these individuals and our society attempting to rescue children from prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation.

A moment ago I said that this is not just about street prostitution. It includes street prostitution, but it's not just about street prostitution. From discussions with police and children's aid workers, we now know that it includes adult entertainment facilities, where underage youth with

some regularity are—I hesitate to use the word “employed,” but “abused” perhaps is a more appropriate word. It includes massage parlours. It includes bawdy houses. It includes escort services and telephone and Internet sex lines and indeed pornography sites.

The legislation, if passed, would allow the police and children's aid society workers to rescue children from these very dangerous situations. It would allow them in some instances to conduct that rescue without a search warrant and without a warrant, I should say, for the apprehension of that individual. A child could be rescued without a warrant if obtaining one would jeopardize the ability to rescue the child from that situation.

It is important to remember that throughout this proposed legislative scheme, the courts are very much involved. It's important to remember that our proposed legislation includes provisions that would ensure that the rights of these victims—and remember, we're talking about young people who are victimized here—would be protected.

1540

So within 24 hours or as soon as possible, a judge or a justice of the peace would be obliged to review the validity of the rescue that took place and the grounds upon which the rescue was conducted. The justice of the peace or the judge would also be obliged to consider what should happen next. That member of the judiciary would then be in a position to place the child in a safe location for up to five days. That's the first instance where we will see the intervention and consideration of members of the judiciary.

By the end of those five days, a second hearing will have to take place in a court of law. I emphasize this before going any further, because I want it to be very clear that at various stages of this proceeding—various stages of the rescue—the courts will be involved and will be there to consider whether this is an appropriate action.

By the end of those five days, a second hearing will take place. At that hearing, a decision will be made. The judge will have an opportunity to consider whether the placement should be extended for a further 30 days, whether the young person, the rescued person, should be placed in a safe location, a secure location, for a further 30 days; whether the child should be returned to his or her parents or legal guardians in those circumstances; and indeed will decide if future intervention is warranted in that particular case, because of course no one size fits all. The facts of every case must and will be considered.

At the outset of my remarks I talked about the member from Sudbury and about my predecessor, Minister Flaherty, as being trailblazers in many respects in this area, and indeed they are. But so is the province of Alberta. We have looked at Alberta's experience with similar legislation. What we saw was quite astounding. We saw that within the first two years of a similar law being in place in Alberta, there were 545 interventions—545 interventions in the first two years.

The former director of an outreach service for prostitutes in Edmonton indicated that the number of young

prostitutes on the streets of Edmonton each and every year before their legislation was in place in Alberta was roughly 200. Since the legislation was passed, that number, in this individual's view, has gone from 200 down to 50. A police officer in Calgary, in southern Alberta, also reported a drastic reduction in the number of young people on the streets engaged in these activities. The police officer indicated that just a fraction of teen prostitutes are out there now compared to the number that were out before the Alberta legislation was passed.

The coordinator of the government's new program has indicated that two thirds of youth who were rescued during the first two years have turned their lives around. Indeed, that's what this is all about: giving young people the opportunity to turn their lives around. Our proposed legislation would allow police or children's aid society workers to rescue sexually exploited children and place them in a safe and secure location for up to 30 days, as determined by a judge—and I've just reviewed the procedure that would be followed. While in this safe and secure location, they would be assessed and a wide range of services and treatment would be considered, again in the context of the individual who is being helped. Services would include medical services, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and counselling, mental health services in some instances and specialized legal services in others. With the help of the children's aid society, some children may be linked to longer term care and support solutions, particularly those children who have ongoing issues and problems.

Let there be no doubt: these are children desperately in need of help. As I mentioned earlier, many of these young people, many of these children, many of the most vulnerable in our society, have been sexually, physically or emotionally abused. In many respects they have been sexually, physically and emotionally abused. Some are addicted to drugs, others to alcohol. Some have sexually transmitted diseases. Many of these young people have given up on themselves. They actually don't believe that they deserve any better or, alternatively, that they could possibly have a better lot in life. We know this isn't true and the Ernie Eves government isn't prepared to give up on them.

Treating child victims of sexual exploitation has a rather high price tag. When drafting this legislation in its current form, I spent some considerable time talking to my colleagues, talking to law enforcement personnel, children's aid workers and considering those costs. I don't for a second doubt that it's money well spent by the government. I don't for a second doubt that this is what government is here to do—to help vulnerable young people in these situations. But I did continue to come back to what in my mind was an inequity in the plan that was previously proposed. I thought about something that had been actually suggested in Saskatchewan by the NDP government there, although I don't believe it has been implemented. That was a proposal that would allow for the government to sue those who exploited these young people in order to recover the damages that were incurred to help save, to rehabilitate these young people.

We believe that if you sexually exploit a child for profit, you should be liable for the costs associated with assisting that young person. This bill, if it is passed, will allow for the government to go to court and convince a judge that it is appropriate that there be a civil order against the individual who was the pimp or the exploiter in any form so that the government may recover the taxpayers' money. That doesn't mean that if we cannot recover for one reason or another, we won't assist this young person; quite the contrary. The assistance will be provided regardless of whether or not there is an ultimate recovery, but if there is someone out there, someone who has a home or a car or a bank account that is there because of the exploitation of the young person or a group of young people, then that asset or those funds should be recovered and returned to the taxpayers of this province in direct proportion to the amount spent to help the young people who were exploited.

In addition, this bill also targets those predators in a very significant way. If this legislation is passed, it would permit the suspension of drivers' licences of pimps and johns convicted of prostitution-related Criminal Code offences if the offence is one involving a motor vehicle. That was a nexus that we needed to draw. We felt it was important for legal reasons in order to ensure that this law survived. With this provision, with the possibility of suspending one's licence, we are sending yet another message. We are sending a strong message that the sexual exploitation of children in the province of Ontario will not be tolerated by the Ernie Eves government.

This bill that we've presented to this honourable assembly should be viewed, in my respectful opinion, as one of a series of bills that have come forward from this government. We are very proud of the fact that we have a Victims' Bill of Rights in this province. We are very proud of the fact that we have the only permanent Office for Victims of Crime in this province. We're proud of the fact that we have 15 child-friendly courts across this province, and these are courts that provide specialized support services to help make the courtroom less intimidating for young people and for witnesses. We are the only province to have an established, comprehensive sex offender registry. There are other provinces that are following our lead, that are making some considerable headway, particularly Alberta, in this regard.

I want to pause, if I may, to acknowledge the work of Minister Turnbull and Minister Tsubouchi, who have worked tirelessly in order to bring forward a sex offender registry that is now the envy of other provinces, that is now working in this province with a 93% registration rate. That means 93% of those offenders in the province who were supposed to register because they committed subject crimes have indeed registered.

1550

In February last year, after much pressure from our government, the government of Ontario, the federal government indicated they were going to move toward a national sex offender registry. I know Minister Tsubouchi, Minister Turnbull and others had been advocating

that movement for some time, hoping the federal Liberals would prioritize this. I take them at their word that they think this is important. It is really essential that we have a national program so that you can't simply move from Kenora to Winnipeg to avoid the sex offender registry. It's essential that we have a program that stretches from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. Certainly we have offered every form of assistance possible to the federal government in relation to this endeavour. We have done so with the other provinces as well. We've offered the software related to our sex offender registry to all the other provinces free of charge.

That brings me to my last point, if I may. This issue, unlike most issues we deal with in this assembly, really should, must, can and, I hope, will cross party lines. This is not an issue where there is any room whatsoever for partisan political behaviour. I hope my comments today have reflected that. What we are doing here is what all the honourable members who put their name on a ballot and were lucky enough to be elected want to do. We want to leave this province a better place than we found it. We want to protect those who are the most vulnerable in our society. We have an opportunity with this bill we are debating today to do just that.

All the parties, and I think this is motivated by nothing other than sincerity and an earnest desire to help, have talked about initiatives like this one and reaching out to help young people who find themselves in these most unfortunate and vulnerable situations. We today have an opportunity to do more than talk. We have an opportunity to work together to pass this very important piece of legislation, and I would encourage every member of this Legislative Assembly to work in a collaborative fashion to allow for the immediate and expeditious passage of this very important bill.

I understand that as the rotation continues, the members for Kitchener Centre and Scarborough Centre will be making some comments.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Further debate?

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I too am pleased to rise and speak in support of Bill 86. My support, though, certainly is tinged with a little apprehension because I don't believe it has covered all the points that my original bill, Bill 18, covered. However, as time goes on, we will be able to fix that. The reality is, as we know, Bill 86 is a combination of Bill 18, which became Bill 6 and finally became Bill 22 in this past session, along with Bill 23. The government has added a few amendments, a couple of very positive points, I think, to the bill which will probably make it a better bill. But when the Attorney General speaks and applauds Alberta for their legislation, I have to remind the government that it was a very partisan approach over on the other side that delayed the passage of my Bill 18 in 1998, after extensive public hearings. Today we have what is essentially Bill 18, the legislation which was presented in 1998.

Enough about the political part of my talk. I want to speak now a little bit about the origin of the bill. As the

Attorney General did, I want to thank some people. First of all, and most importantly, I want to thank the father who came up to me in 1998, just before Christmas, and said, "The best Christmas present that could ever be given to me is legislation passed to protect my child, who is now involved in prostitution."

His name was Alan. He made a presentation before our committee when the government chose to send this bill to committee for public hearings in 1998. We heard from 50 different individuals and groups—all, except one, very supportive of the legislation. I look across the way and I see Mr Klees, who was part of those public hearings, who has been a part of this bill since 1998 and, to his credit—I want to compliment him—has always spoken in support of this type of legislation. So indeed it has crossed partisan political lines.

This is good legislation. It is legislation I only wish had been in place in 1998, but back then there was far more partisan a point of view when we discussed this legislation or any other legislation.

I want to thank Alan for his bravery, for his commitment, for coming up to me. Think about it. Think about how much courage that must have taken, for a father to come up and see a representative, whom he knew because I talked to the children, and say, "Listen, we have a serious concern here."

Second, I want to congratulate the young lady, Aian's daughter, who was involved in prostitution and who made a presentation before the committee. We'll call her Mallory because that's the name she used during the public hearings. Mallory is a brave young lady who is continuing to work to turn her life around. She deserves this bill. I only wish it had been in place when it could have helped her, but as Mallory said in her presentation, "I want legislation passed so that I won't see my younger sister or my friends caught in the same type of trap as I was caught in." Mallory, today, finally, you have gotten your wish, and hopefully this legislation will be effective legislation.

I want to thank our very proactive police service in Sudbury, who helped ensure that there was support across the province of Ontario for this. In fact, over 50 police services have come on board, thanks in large part to Chief Alex McCauley's hard work in sending out letters asking for support from his colleagues across the province. I want to thank that police service and Chief Alex McCauley.

I want to thank my community of Sudbury, because they've worked hard and they've been very supportive along the way of this type of legislation. When some would say it's legislation that shouldn't be, my community said it's legislation that must be. Today, albeit it's government Bill 86, it is a confirmation that they indeed were right.

In this spirit of sharing accolades for people who do things right, I want to thank government members across the way. I think the Attorney General has handled this rather well. I think the former Attorney General handled it quite well. Former Solicitor General David Tsubouchi,

I know for a fact argued in 1998 and 1999 for this type of resolution. I believe they deserve credit and I'm not above offering that credit.

I also believe that the NDP, the third party, deserve credit in this as well, because they offered very positive amendments over the course of Bill 18, Bill 6, Bill 22 and now Bill 86—all the same bill, by the way. Along the way, they offered amendments to make it a stronger resolution, to make it a stronger bill, to make sure it stood up to a court challenge, that it is legislation that is sound law in principle as well as in fact.

1600

For the people of Ontario, this may be one of the few times where you see legislation introduced by a member of the opposition, supported continually by members on the government side, and altered to make it better by members of the third party. Although it may be entitled Bill 86, it really is a combination of the commitment of the people in this House, regardless of partisan political stripe. Today, finally, after several years, we have achieved success in putting the bill together. I have no doubt that on Thursday when this comes to a vote, it will be accepted unanimously by all members in the House.

Is there a need for this legislation? Absolutely. There is no question that there is a need. I want to repeat some of the statistics I read into the record the first time we debated the government bill, which eventually died because the government prorogued the House. They're telling figures, they're startling figures, and they're figures that we in this House should be reminded of.

This was a survey conducted by Street Outreach Services. It's a very proactive group here in Toronto that deals with children involved in prostitution. They asked the many people they dealt with what their place of origin was. We're talking about child prostitutes here. Fifty-three per cent of the people they dealt with came from Metropolitan Toronto, 25% came from other cities in Ontario, 10% came from western provinces, and then there were some from eastern provinces, from Quebec, and from outside Canada. That gives you an indication that this problem is not a Toronto problem, not a Sudbury problem, but is a local problem, an urban problem, a rural problem, a problem not only in Ontario, not only in Canada, but indeed internationally.

Another question they asked was what their age was when they left home. Well, 45% of the people who responded said they were over 16. Startling, though, is the next figure: 51% said they were between 11 and 15 years of age.

I look at the pages and I look at Lauren looking at Jordan, and do you know what? They look in amazement. This is a lesson not only for adults but for you pages or for any children who may be watching: make sure you take time to listen to your parents and to thank your parents for the excellent work and love and commitment they have for you. Pages, 51% of the people Street Outreach Services work with prostituted themselves between 11 and 15 years of age. You have much to be thankful for.

They asked what their age was when they had their first trick. For those of us who don't understand that language, that's when they became involved with either a john or a pimp. Some 41% of those respondents said they were between 11 and 15 years of age.

The next question SOS asked was, "For how long have you been involved in prostitution?" Sadly, 56% of the respondents said they'd been involved in prostitution for between one and three years. Even sadder is that 24% of those people said they had been prostituting themselves for between four and six years.

The people of Ontario, like I or anyone else in this place, are shocked that children are being sexually exploited and abused for that length of time, and so young.

One would ask, "What could cause something so terrible to happen? They must all come from bad homes. They mustn't have any support mechanisms in place at home or at school. They must be outcasts." The reality is: no, no and no. Some come from very good families, some come from socio-economic levels that are well above average and some are just like your children or my children. They're just ordinary kids who somehow have become exploited and abused by johns and pimps.

The prime reason for that was to support a drug habit, to have extra money in your pocket, to buy the nice things that they couldn't afford otherwise, not understanding the severe social and emotional impact this sexual abuse and exploitation would have on them.

We're happy today to be able to stand here and suggest that there will be unanimous support by all members in the House. I only wish this had happened sooner. I only wish that those people who were affected by this exploitation and abuse in 1998 could have been helped. But I guess hindsight is always 20-20, and we could have handled this differently, and maybe we weren't thinking of what was in the best interests of the children when we debated this bill, when it was Bill 18 in 1998, when we heard 49 out of 50 people suggest that this type of legislation was important.

Well, we're here today, and we're here to say, "We support it." We're here to say that it will be legislation that will help rid the streets of these johns and pimps. I don't think anybody in this House, or in Ontario, has any use for them at all.

Let me change subjects for a moment, but it is related. Bill 86 is a combination of Bills 22 and 23, as I said, bills I introduced. But I also introduced, the very same day, Bill 24, An Act to amend the Municipal Act with respect to adult entertainment parlours. I would ask the Attorney General to read this bill carefully, because I think there are many opportunities for this government to act in a way that can be very proactive in ensuring that those people, those groups, those companies, those owners who still, and will continue to, exploit children because there isn't the strong type of legislation in place like Bill 24 has—I would hope that the Attorney General and the Eves government look carefully at this bill and study it carefully. If you can't adopt this bill, then look at adopting or creating legislation that will clearly impact on

those—some would say municipal responsibilities but I don't say that; I say it's clearly the responsibility of any level of government—businesses that would conduct what would appear to be something on the surface but something so terrible when you scratch beneath that surface. I would hope that the government, if they're not considering Bill 24, would be considering legislation equally as tough or, as my dream would be, tougher. But that's not going to happen.

1610

That's one of the concerns I have with Bill 86, and it was something the committee debated with regard to punishments for johns and pimps. Mr Kees and I have agreed an awful lot on this legislation, and one of the things we agree on is that the punishments aren't tough enough. I know the punishments that are in place for other violations, but I thought this would have been a good opportunity for us to set an example. In fact, Speaker, if I could refer to you, because you were part of the committee that was studying this clause-by-clause, it was your suggestion, if I'm not mistaken—and I'm almost going to quote you exactly—that we be bold and try to set the benchmark for other legislation to match ours. I wish they would have listened to you as a representative of the third party at that committee. I wish they would have imposed tougher penalties, but the reality is that we have this legislation here, and if it has to be amended in the future, I know whomever the government of the day is will amend this legislation to ensure that it accomplishes the goal that I know the government wants, I know the NDP wants and I know Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals want.

So today we stand united in supporting good legislation. I have to comment, though, that I don't like standing and supporting good legislation in a time allocation motion, because it stifles the debate we should be having. I really believe this legislation could have been debated more. I believe we had an opportunity here to involve in a very positive way more members of the Legislature in debating this, but that's not the case. And today I don't want to spend time telling the people of Ontario that at 5:50 I'm going to be voting against the time allocation motion. The only reason we're doing that is because we don't want to stifle debate in this place; we want to encourage debate. But the bill itself, when it comes to a vote, will certainly be supported by Rick Bartolucci.

I want to suggest to this government that we adopt some of the strategies that are being used in British Columbia with regard to the very proactive things they're doing out there. I don't agree with very much that's happening in British Columbia, but the protection of children is one thing they're working on quite aggressively. They have posters, they have billboards advertising where and how these kids can get help. I believe this legislation is going to require some public relations and some public education so that these kids will know they have a place to go; these kids will know there are people who care; these kids will know they have an alternative to their exploitation, to the abuse they're taking at the

hands of johns and pimps; these kids will know the government is sensitive to their needs; these kids will know they do not have to continue that life they've been caught up in—that johns are bad, that pimps are bad, that selling your body is bad, that selling your body for drugs is bad, that drug use is bad. There is a public education component of this legislation that is key to its success, key to having an impact on the people who are to be reached by this legislation.

In conclusion, let me say to the government, thank you on behalf of the children who will be saved by this legislation, but remember, you have to put the necessary resources into this legislation. You have to have that public education component which is key to its success. If there is a lesson to be learned, it is that kids who have to be protected must be protected as quickly as possible.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I will be sharing my time, hopefully, with Mr Martin when he arrives—the member from Sault Ste Marie—

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): He's not here?

Mr Prue: He is here—and also possibly, if he arrives as well, Mr Bisson, the member from Timmins-James Bay.

This is a very serious bill and I want to tell you, although I was not here at the time when Mr Bartolucci first introduced this bill, it is a bill whose time I think has come. People across this country understand what is happening to young children, understand the perils and the terror of prostitution and what is happening on the streets.

It is a bill that we probably would have hidden from public view only a generation ago. We would have pretended it didn't happen. We would have thought that those children who were out there on the streets were somehow bad or somehow unable to help themselves, were probably beyond the control of society, and we probably would have turned a blind eye. In fact, I have to say, having grown up in Regent Park, which is where I'm from—I'm a kid from Regent Park who has the privilege of standing here in this House—I have never forgotten what it was like to grow up there. I have never forgotten the things that I saw on those streets. I have never forgotten the poor and I hope I will never forget the faces of despair on the young men and women who were on the streets in those days—because yes, they were on the streets then, just as they're on the streets today.

Throughout my life I have had the fortune and the misfortune of dealing with both victims and those who victimized. As a worker with the immigration department over many years and as counsel for the Minister of Employment and Immigration appearing before the Immigration and Refugee Board, I remember on more than one occasion, actually on four or five, dealing before the board with people who had victimized children, who had been convicted of victimizing children, of pimping children, people who had done unspeakable horrors to children, and who were subject to deportation as they were not Canadian citizens.

I remember, also to my horror, the sympathetic view they got from that body, the sympathetic view that people

would have of them, that the crime they had perpetrated on young and innocent victims, the crime that they had committed on our society, was one that could be forgiven, was one that could be wiped out by a simple jail term, and that they could not be or should not be removed from this country and from their immediate families. I remember with horror those days. I think that society's view has changed even within my generation.

1620

I remember, as a mayor and as a member of Toronto city council, meeting with the family of Martin Kruze around the issue of whether to put the luminous veil on the viaduct where so many—so many—people had jumped to their deaths. I never met Martin Kruze, but I met his father and looked that man in the eye and understood full well the torment that had been not only Martin's torment but his father's. His son had leaped to his death. His son had been on that bridge on that fateful night and had jumped off because of the despair in his life over what had happened to him as a young man going to Maple Leaf Gardens and because of the people who had perpetrated that crime.

I see this bill here today. It's a bill that I'm sure is going to pass and must pass. I'm going to speak to some of the things that should have been in the bill as well, so bear with me.

It is a bill that must pass for the protection of children. How did these children get here? We read historical books written by Charles Dickens. He talks about the poor in the streets and what they did. They went out in the streets, and most of them stole. Most of them stole things from shops. They were pickpockets. They were thieves. They did whatever they needed to do to survive. There was no welfare state that would look after them if their families neglected them or if their parents died and they were orphans. They were subject to all the things that children are subject to today. There were people just like Fagin. And just like you read in that book, there are Fagins in our society today, taking the young and vulnerable and those who have nothing else and no one else upon whom they can rely.

How did those kids get there today? They get there from many sources. They are not all poor, but most of them were. They are not all on drugs, but most of them take those drugs. They are not all escaping family violence, but most of them have been subject to family violence for part or all of their lives. They are not all without work; they are not all impecunious. But most of them cannot get jobs or do anything, because of their age, their lack of schooling or their lack of abilities, other than sell their bodies. They are subject to the Fagins of this city, of this province, of this country and probably of the entire world.

All of us who have travelled outside this great province and this great country have seen that it exists literally everywhere. If you go to the Third World especially, you can see that children are even more exploited, if that is possible, than you would find them being exploited here. These same children take to the streets. They take

mind-numbing drugs to get rid of the pain. They are commercially exploited as prostitutes. They are commercially exploited in pornography. They are commercially exploited in massage parlours. This is not done just for lewd pleasure. It is not out there just to satisfy someone or because someone wants that. It is because people know you can make money off this. The people, the pimps, who do this, do it primarily for money. They are able to have authority over the defenceless, and they do it to make money.

That's why I'm supporting this bill in the long run, because we as a society have to stop this. If we can stop it here, maybe the movement will grow. Maybe the movement will grow to all of Canada. Maybe the movement will grow to the Third World. Maybe there won't be all the sexual exploitation of children, where people leave various countries and go to the Third World where it is much freer and much easier to do. Maybe we, as a worldwide society, can say no to the way children have been treated, not just now, but in century after century leading up to today. As we become more enlightened, we need to make a difference and a change.

I commend Mr Bartolucci for first recommending this bill, and I commend the Legislature of Alberta for first enacting it. I wish we had been first, but it's better to be second than not to do it at all. I commend the Legislature of Alberta for having taken this bill, because it was a difficult process. As members may know, when it was first passed it was challenged in the courts and was overturned. It was only later that the Supreme Court of Canada in turn overturned that, which allowed the bill to continue and which allowed it to exist.

The New Democratic Party members of the Alberta Legislature supported that bill. They supported it while at the same time drawing attention to the poor and vulnerable. That's what I hope to do in the few minutes we have here, to draw attention to the poor and vulnerable, because it's not just enough to take these children off the streets; we have to do something to make sure they don't end up on the streets in the first place. If they are not there to be exploited, they won't be exploited. If they have alternatives in their lives, they will in the overwhelming majority of cases not choose this.

The problems I see with the bill, even though we're going to support it because, as the previous speaker from the Liberal Party stated, it's a start; we have to start—but there are problems already inherent in this bill that I hope the members opposite will listen to and I hope all of the members of the House will listen to, because in the next Parliament I'm sure there will be an opportunity to remedy it, to see what is happening out there in the courts, to see what is happening with the judges' orders, to see what is happening when the police and the children's aid officials are involved and to fine-tune this so that it will actually work to the betterment of the children. I wish we could have done that right away, but I want to talk about what I think needs to be done in the very near future to make this a really good bill.

The first one is that this bill is tied in, in part, to the Child and Family Services Act. When the children's aid

representative appeared before the committee looking at Mr Bartolucci's bill a couple of years ago in Sudbury, that representative spoke very carefully and succinctly about the problem with the bill. The problem with the bill is that the Child and Family Services Act is actually a superior bill for looking after children, certainly for looking after children who are under the age of 16. It will not necessarily cover those between 16 and 18, but it certainly is better than this bill in terms of looking after those who are under 16, at least according to the children's aid society. They advised that that bill gives more power than this bill will to judges, to those who will be able to make the necessary decisions to look after the children once they have been brought in and put under the court's protection.

Also, the problem with this is that this particular bill has, right in the body of it, the fact that it will override the Child and Family Services Act in a number of cases, and that is something that I see as a difficulty, given that the children's aid society is quite clear and is quite adamant that that bill is in many ways superior to this one.

The second problem I see with the bill is that although we can do what is necessary, we need to know that there will be resources within the various and sundry government departments spread out all across the system, that they have the resources to do what will be necessary if the 50 or 100 or 1,000 child prostitutes are taken off the streets. Will there be the resources necessary? I have to question the commitment of all of us, not just the government but all of us, to make sure that there are necessary resources when we do finally get them. There have been many, many government cuts, not only in the last seven years but in the last 15 years. There have been government cuts to many programs.

1630

Just to outline some of them which will further put these children at risk: agencies that deal with at-risk youth either have not had any funding increase in the last seven years or they've actually had decreases. These are the agencies that are out there dealing with the children and the youth at risk who are on the streets. They are working tirelessly, night and day, at least in this city that I know, up and down Yonge Street and all the other major thoroughfares of this city, looking for children who are out there on the streets who are prostituting themselves. They don't have enough social workers, they don't have enough volunteers, they don't have enough money, they don't have enough resources or computers in order to do their programs. Each and every year, when they come before governments—this government, municipal governments, the federal government—asking for additional sources of funds, they are told to go out and fundraise. Going out to fundraise is perhaps not a bad thing, but it takes time away from what they need to be doing. It takes time that they could be helping children. I think we need to look at ourselves in our heart of hearts, if we're going to pass this, to also look at funding those agencies which will be the eyes and ears of the commun-

ity to first recognize which children are on the street and which ones are under the control of pimps and which ones are selling their bodies.

We need to look at our underfunding of legal aid, the very people who can go out and provide legal services to these children, who can be their advocates in the courts to get them out of the situations they find themselves in, who know the legal rights of those who are being exploited, and who can help them to work against the exploiters. We need to better fund legal aid in order to help each and every one of them.

We need to start looking as a society at why we are cutting the funding in schools and why we have taken it to the bare-bones minimum, where a funding formula will not allow things like social workers in the schools to first identify the kids when they're having problems in the schools before they run away from home, to identify the problems they're having with poverty, to identify the problems they're having with education, the problems they're having with their families, to see the telltale signs, if there are signs of abuse, whether sexual, physical or mental, and to deal with those children while they are still in the school and where it is much easier to help them. We need to wonder why the schools are cutting out their counsellors, that there are no longer enough counselling services to provide trouble to at-risk youth, many of whom will end up on the street and be subject to exploitation. We need to wonder and question constantly why we are continuing the cutting of funding to school boards when much of this money is used for support services. That is among the first things that go and it is, at the same time, that which exacerbates the situation that many young people will find themselves in.

We need to ask questions. This is a tough one; there could be catcalls from across the floor. We need to ask the question about the drastic cut in welfare rates. One must remember that nearly half of all the people on welfare in this province are children. Every time the welfare rate is cut or not increased, the poverty rate is vested down upon the children we should all be trying to help, those children who, in year after year of living with poverty, will attempt to escape it. Even if there is a loving parent at home, even if there is a school they can go to, they will attempt to escape the poverty the only way they know how, and inevitably that's by running away and coming to a big city like Toronto, Hamilton or Ottawa. They will gravitate to the big cities and will be subject to those who will exploit them. We need to question whether, in keeping people poor, in keeping the poorest of the poor destitute and without hope, we are not in fact driving up that rate of prostitution ourselves.

We need to look, as a society, at whether there is not sufficient housing, whether we are building enough housing, whether in fact in places like Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton and London, where the rents have started to skyrocket, we are doing everything we can to make sure people can afford them so that they don't have to live on the streets, so that they can find decent accommodation, so that they don't have to prostitute themselves or do

whatever they need to find additional funds merely to have a roof over their head.

The third problem I have with this bill, and Mr Bartolucci had it in his original one, is that there's nothing here that would allow the bill in any way, other than to take away the driver's licence of a john or the driver's licence of a pimp, to do anything and really to put them in jail.

I understand the Criminal Code of Canada has provisions that will put them in jail, but it is very, very difficult to rely simply on that because you have to prove it beyond a reasonable doubt. Many of these children are afraid, they're terrified, of those who exploit them. It will be extremely difficult in the long term to do anything with the Criminal Code, and it might be better to use a civil remedy. I don't see it here and I'm disappointed, for whatever number of reasons, that it has been removed from the original bill as put forward by Mr Bartolucci.

In the end, though, one has to ask the question: is this bill better than nothing at all? The answer, quite simply, is yes, it is. As Asclepius, the father of medicine in old Greek times, so clearly said when instructing physicians, physicians should do all they can to help. But there is something that is even written in the medical code that he wrote all those years ago, even to this day. It says, "Do no harm." Does this bill do any harm to those children? I think not.

So I am satisfied in weighing all the balances, in seeing what is out there, in seeing the difference that this bill might make or might not make because it's not strong enough, that it is still worthy of support. We are not doing additional harm to these children, who require only our support.

What I am asking, though, in passing this bill, is that we watch it very carefully to make sure it is doing what it's supposed to, to make sure that the children who are brought in are not further harmed, to make sure that we as a society do everything we can for them and for every other child, whether they're engaged in this or not, who is poor, every other child who needs support, every other child who needs education, every other child who needs hospitalization, every other child who has problems, every other child, as we saw some here today, with autism. Those who need help should be given it, and this bill is one small factor. We as a government, we as a society, we as a people in Ontario, need to do all the things that make sure those kids don't end up on the street, even if that means we have to expend additional resources, if that means we have to forgo more tax cuts, if that means we have to sometimes say to people, "This has to be done and you're not going to get the program or the policy that you want put in place." I have always believed that our first obligation is to help our children. This bill will do that, but we need to do more and we will do more.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the time I've had and I hope and pray that this bill, in the long term, will do for children on the streets as much as Charles Dickens did with his very brilliant works at the turn of the century.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): This is a bill in which I think everybody in this House would have great deal of interest. Any one of us who is a father or a mother would have a great deal of interest in this. We can't envision having our own children fall into a state like this, we can't envision that someone else's children could fall into a state like this, and yet probably everyone of us knows someone whose child—or we know the child who has fallen into a situation in which they're sexually exploited.

I have to say that for me personally it's an honour to be able to speak to this bill. The legislation is about helping. It's about helping the children escape the misery of sexual exploitation. It's about helping their families, who desperately want their children to get the treatment they need in order that they can come back home. It's about helping police and helping the children's aid society workers, both of whom need the proper tools to rescue and protect sexually exploited children.

1640

The bill, if passed, would allow police and children's aid society workers to rescue the sexually exploited children from a range of situations and place them in a safe, secure location for up to 30 days. While in this safe, secure location, the children would then be able to receive some treatment and services that they need to get their lives back on track.

The legislation recognizes a troubling trend today in the sexual exploitation of children. More and more we see these children being kept underground to avoid detection by law enforcement officials.

I think we need to think back to our own childhoods. Many of us got involved in sports. Yes, we got involved in playing some hi-jinks from time to time and they didn't get us into trouble. But the kids today are under much more pressure than we ever were. If they're being kept underground to keep from being detected, how can the police find them by simply stepping up patrols in those areas?

If we have kids being forced to turn tricks, if the kids are being hidden away, forced to sell themselves, how can the police find them if they're in the back rooms of strip clubs or even over the telephone or over the Internet? This legislation, if passed, would give police and children's aid society workers the tools they need to rescue the children from any range of dangerous situations, including street prostitution, adult entertainment facilities, massage parlours, bawdy houses, escort services, telephone or Internet sex lines and the pornography industry.

The proposed legislation would allow police to rescue children with or without a warrant, and I think that's very important to keep in mind. While in most circumstances, a warrant would be obtained, nevertheless there are times that removal of the child without the warrant is necessary. It's important because, if the obtaining of a warrant would jeopardize that child, jeopardize the ability to rescue that child, then it's important that the police be able to rescue the child without obtaining the warrant.

To ensure that the child's rights are respected, the proposed legislation would require a court to review the validity of the rescue within 24 hours. Within five days, a second hearing would occur, at which time the court would be able to make a number of decisions in the best interests of the child. This could include extending the placement for up to 30 days. It could include returning the child to his or her parents or legal guardian, if appropriate care and supervision would be provided—and I should say "if appropriate care and supervision would be provided." I think we all know that there are those cases where that supervision is not there. It could include determining that future intervention is not required in the case of this particular child.

We know that sexually exploited children often end up on the streets after fleeing abusive situations at home. They hope for a better life, but instead what happens is that things get much worse for them. These children are abused again and again by the predators who sexually exploit them for profit.

Often these children are drawn into addiction to drugs and alcohol by pimps, since that is often a way to increase the child's reliance on them. These children need help to break out of this terrible cycle of sexual exploitation and substance abuse. We need to give them back the dignity they deserve. This legislation, if passed, would help ensure that sexually exploited children would get the services and the treatment they need to begin a healthy new life. These kids would be placed in a safe, secure location for up to 30 days, where they would get the help and therapy they need. The drug and alcohol counselling would be provided to them. Specialized legal services would be provided to them. Some of these specialized legal services might include witness protection or victim-witness assistance.

We might not consider this all that important. How important could this be with these children? Well, it's very important because, without that, these children's lives are in danger. We sometimes downplay the danger these children are in. As the member for Sudbury said earlier, let's understand that many of these truly are children. They're ages 11, 12, 13 and 14 years old.

They will have medical services such as detoxification and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. They will have mental health services and they will have counselling support services. The children's aid society would assume responsibility for managing the child's care while in a safe location. With the help of the children's aid society, some children can be linked to longer-term care and support services to assist them with ongoing issues and problems.

The sexual exploitation of children bears a high cost, especially for the kids emotionally, but also for us financially; for us taxpayers who ultimately will end up paying for the protection and treatment of these children. We think it is only appropriate that the people who prey on these kids be held responsible. That is why this proposed legislation would allow the government to sue pimps and others who sexually exploit children for commercial

purposes to recover the costs associated with treating their victims. Under the proposed bill, the province would be able to sue for the full amount of taxpayers' dollars that had been spent, or that may be spent in the future, to provide assistance to a particular victim or identifiable group of victims who have been exploited as a result of an abuser's conduct.

The proposed bill would target predators in another important way: it would permit the suspension of drivers' licences of pimps and johns convicted of prostitution-related Criminal Code offences involving the use of a motor vehicle. With these two measures, we are sending a strong message that the sexual exploitation of children will not be tolerated in Ontario.

We recognize this legislation is not a cure-all, but clearly it is a positive first step in protecting vulnerable children. When developing this legislation, we consulted with police and children's aid society workers, the people who work on the front lines with sexually exploited children. They told us that this bill, if passed, would help make a difference. It would give them another tool they need to better protect Ontario's children.

I do urge all members to support the bill, and I'm sure they will.

1650

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I am pleased to speak to this bill but I, as are all of us in this chamber, am saddened that there's a need for such a bill.

I certainly want to compliment the government for putting these bills together. I've been here since 1999 and I need to recognize our member Rick Bartolucci's commitment to this issue, on and on to fight for the children in this province. I've been very impressed and have been appreciative of his efforts. I also wish to compliment the New Democratic Party for their support of this bill. But as I said, I very much regret that in our Ontario we need to have it.

I have mentioned before in the House and will note that our family has fostered many children over the years and a significant number of them, the majority of them, had been sexually abused. I need to pay compliments to the foster families in this province. We work with children who tell us stories and enrich our lives, but they also open up to us in our families the subculture—the absolutely horrible, repulsive subculture—that exists that finds it acceptable to abuse children. So foster families that work with these children and bring them into their homes I'm most appreciative of. It is a special challenge.

My experience and knowledge on this issue come from being a board member on a CAS and being a foster parent. I know that in far too many cases the abuse that takes place has been either with the knowledge or the involvement of the family. This bill deals with it very well, whether it's a family member or not. But we also need to recognize and have in place the financial resources and the supports to make this bill work to best serve the victims who are being removed from the bad environment.

Of all of the children we have fostered, not once have we fostered a child who did not love their parents. The

child may have known what was happening was wrong and, in fact, I've always been struck by the irony that the children knew it was wrong but the adults always claimed they didn't know it was wrong or, in my belief, they allowed their own selfish needs to overcome their obligation to protect their children. The children knew it was wrong, but they were still their parents.

This bill provides that a police officer or a child protection worker can remove that child from that bad environment. That is the only solution and I applaud that. But we need to recognize that from the child's viewpoint, in some cases, in the cases where their family is involved, they are being removed from their family. What we view as a place of safety, they will view as a jail: they are being sentenced to being taken away from their family. Their family may have done what's wrong, but it's the child who pays the price by having been taken away and put in with strangers—literally with strangers. I think it's fair to say that these children feel at times that they've been sentenced to a foster home, they've been sentenced to a group home, where they've been sentenced to a place of safety. That requires that the people there be highly skilled and highly trained to deal with what is a very emotional situation. I don't think any of us could comprehend being yanked out of our parents' house at 4 o'clock in the morning and placed with strangers. It is most traumatic.

We have over the years worked with children who have been sexually exploited—and I can understand why you don't accept or believe this—as young as four years old. We know of other families that have worked with children even younger than that. So for that child, that is a very traumatic experience and we need to have in place the supports.

We also have provision in the bill that within five days of apprehension the matter must be before a judge. That's good timing. That provides the opportunity for the police and the children's aid society to assemble the information they need to present to the judge. It also is a compromise. If in fact the information, when it's found out, does not bear out the allegations, the child can be returned home as safely as possible, because that has to be our number one goal.

We need to recognize that the child is entitled to be in the court, as they should be, but a court is a very, very difficult experience for a younger child. I'm sure as adults we would find it difficult to be in court. It's a very formal system that the children are not used to and they are in there perhaps in an adversarial position with their parents. Their parents may very well be there, if the parents were the abusers. The abuser is going to be in court, potentially, and we're asking the children to be in that same room. The government must provide funding for the court systems that allows the courts to minimize the impact upon these children, upon these victims, whether it be that they are able to give testimony by tape, whether it be with the children in another room, whether it be some mechanism to prevent the child from having to sit across from or, in some very rare cases, even be cross-examined by the offender.

Certainly the bill is good, but I need to emphasize that there need to be the resources put in place so that the victim is not re-victimized.

If in fact the decision is made that that child cannot return to that home situation and must move on to another placement, we need to recognize the traumatic effect on that child. The abuse that takes place against these children can influence—not “can” influence; “will” influence—the rest of their life. For the child, they have had their childhood stolen, because they can’t forget what they have learned; it has become part of their fabric. We have worked with children when they’re four, five or six years old, and they know things that they should not have to know, and they’ve experienced things that they should never have had to experience. When you remove them from that climate and put them in a place of safety, that information is in their head and will stay in their head for the rest of their life.

We have a dire shortage of mental health services in this province for victims, particularly young victims of child abuse. To put them on a waiting list—this happens in too many jurisdictions—where they may wait a year or two for counselling is unbelievable.

The children’s aid society for Hastings county had some money from the province that they used to counsel victims of sexual abuse. At the time, before the name change, the Ministry of Community and Social Services removed that money, took away every penny of it, and redirected the money to a society located in another area. So in a community that already had a dire shortage of mental health services for victims of sexual abuse, it went to zero. These victims shouldn’t have to pay the price for balancing the provincial budget. These victims deserve support from us. These victims deserve mental health services, and we’re not talking one or two visits.

Again, none of us—and we should be very grateful. I shouldn’t say, “none of us,” but none of us that I know of in this chamber have ever experienced that trauma of sexual abuse and then being removed from our parents.

We need to accept that it will cost money to deliver what the bill intends to do. To simply take the child out of the environment and leave them to deal with the mental challenges is in fact to leave them as victims for the rest of their life. We should be striving to do that extra, to support them, and that’s not happening.

If we take a child who has been sexually exploited by their parents and move them to a place of safety, if we put ourselves in that child’s shoes, we would realize that that child has lost their family, probably for the rest of their life. They have lost their parents, because even if the offender is just one of the parents, they will have lost contact with their parents for the rest of their life. That’s literally like a death in the family. They will lose access to their siblings, potentially, because there have been cases where not all children have been removed from the home, and there have been cases where they’ve been placed in different foster homes. So they’ve lost their siblings, they’ve lost that peer support. They’ve lost every possession that was in their house; they’ve lost

family photographs, school mementoes. This may not seem significant to some of us, but they’ve lost things such as their family pet. A child who is removed from that environment starts over.

I would like to suggest that the government give serious consideration to giving the child victim the right, when they have been removed from a family situation, to have their possessions brought to them. They don’t have that right now. The children come into our home with the clothing on their backs. In 15 years, we’ve never had an instance where their natural family has consented to give them as much as a photograph of their family, as much as a school memento—absolutely nothing. The law now is that they don’t have to.

I believe what a child possesses in that home should be available to them, because if they move on and never return home, they shouldn’t have to start over at zero to accumulate their life history. But again, that requires action beyond what this bill does to make sure we are taking the victims and not simply yanking them out of the situation and saying, “Look, we’ve saved you.” As good as that is, we need to understand we have taken on some family responsibilities.

1700

I’ll tell you another statistic that bothers me with these children who have been removed from areas where they’ve been sexually exploited. Fewer than 5% of them go on to post-secondary education. What tends to happen is that when they turn 18, they cease being a crown ward. The province of Ontario says, “You’re 18 now. We have taken you out of the unsafe environment. You’re now 18 and on you go.” Anyone who has either gone to college or university or sponsored a child at college or university knows there are substantial financial costs. There’s also substantial emotional support needed. Going to university or college is not an easy thing. So when we rescue these victims, which is the right thing, we need to remind ourselves that we have a commitment to help them be successful. As any average parent would help their child when they’re past 18, if they’re going into post-secondary, I strongly believe that this government has an obligation to say, “We will serve in the role of parent for you. We have taken on that responsibility.” But remember, it costs money.

I would suggest that we need stronger penalties than are provided in this bill. Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals call for stronger penalties. You need only talk to a victim for a few minutes or to have lived with a foster child who has been a victim for some time to realize how absolutely horrible it is. It is not murder, but it is taking away the spirit of that child. We need to recognize that the penalties need to be greater.

We also need to recognize the children’s aid society workers. The province has brought in new standards. The province has new demands for the workers. I have no quarrel with that. But we have workers who are being staffed on a formula that doesn’t recognize the extra paperwork or that for our children’s aid societies it’s not just a job. They don’t come in at 8:30 and go home

at 4:30. They are dealing with very emotional issues with these children. They tend to stay on in the evenings and become part of the case with these children. We need to recognize that we need better funding and more support for our workers for it.

Certainly we support this bill, but I ask, I demand, that the government put the other supports in place that will ensure that child has every opportunity to be successful after they're removed from that environment.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill. We are doing a very serious piece of public business here this evening. I want to make sure we look at it in the fullest context possible. I believe that in almost all instances it's important to have the law on your side and have the resources and power to deal with specific instances when the law has been broken or when people are being used or abused. On the other hand, in this place, when we consider, as we do here, what we might do about a particular circumstance or situation or challenge in a community, we have to look at it in its fullest context. For example, in this instance we talk about dealing with child prostitution. As I read the bill, I see really not much in here concerning the circumstance within which many children find themselves—the issue of poverty—and what in their family might be pushing them into a life that is so obviously difficult, a choice they make that I don't think most children in normal circumstances would make. You have to ask yourself, why would they do that? What in our society today, in a province as rich as Ontario and a country as rich as Canada, would see so many young people choosing to live on the street and make money by offering their bodies to people who have no other use for them or for their bodies except their own self-gratification and to meet some perverted need they have?

In speaking to this bill and indicating that at the end of the day I guess our caucus would probably support it, I would say that we have some really serious and significant concerns.

Just to back up a little bit, and perhaps for those who haven't been watching or don't understand, Bill 86 was introduced by the Attorney General on June 21, 2001. It replaced Bill 176, which was introduced in late December 2000—so it's been around for a little bit—and died when the House prorogued. There have been no significant changes to this bill from the previous bill.

However, the important thing here is that it wasn't the government that introduced this; it was Mr Bartolucci from Sudbury, seeing a difficulty in his own community, in the very limited and narrow way we have an opportunity to effect change in this place. I know in speaking to him and knowing of him that he would want to do the fuller thing that needs to be done here in terms of responding to the circumstance that young people who choose to go into prostitution probably find themselves in. However, given the very real circumstance that there are young people on the streets of Sudbury who are selling their bodies, as I'm sure there are on the streets of Sault Ste Marie and probably of every community across

this province, he introduced a bill in May 1998 that was—

Interjection.

Mr Martin: Not that much different, but there was one important difference in Mr Bartolucci's bill, and it was addressed at the hearings.

Mr Bartolucci introduced his bill originally in 1998 and again in 1999. I think we can take it from that that he was committed and was going to make sure something happened.

The main difference between this bill and the bill of the member from Sudbury is that his bill attempted to create a provincial offence against pimps and johns. It's one thing to go after the young people who find themselves on the street—who oftentimes find themselves victims before they ever get to the street and then victims again on the street—and not deal with those who are actually doing the victimizing: the pimps and the johns. From what I understand, there really is nothing in this bill that deals with that, and that's a serious shortcoming that we on this side take some umbrage with.

The government feels that doing that kind of thing is outside provincial jurisdiction. Well, in most instances, in my experience in my 53 years of life, where there's a will, there's a way. You find a way to do the right thing.

"The bill would authorize a police officer or a children's aid society worker to apprehend a child under 18 years of age, with or without a warrant, if the police officer or worker has reasonable grounds to believe that the child has been sexually exploited for commercial purposes or is at risk of sexual exploitation for commercial purposes in prostitution, pornography, adult entertainment facilities, massage parlours, escort services, sex lines and other sexual activities carried on for financial or other gain."

The bill deals with conditions around confinement, an assessment of the child and timelines for court procedures. "The child may be confined in a locked facility."

The bill would allow the government the "right of recovery from a person who sexually exploits a child for commercial purposes for the costs for the protection of the child and to assist the child in leaving situations in which he or she is sexually exploited for commercial purposes."

1710

As I said, we supported the bill going forward to committee and we indicated we would support the bill at second reading. Unfortunately, we said then and say now that we have serious concerns with this bill, and we don't believe they were adequately addressed at committee. We're concerned that this bill doesn't prescribe the conditions of the facilities where these young people will be locked in, and it doesn't require them to receive any kind of treatment or counselling. I believe my colleague from Beaches-East York spoke a few minutes ago to the further concern we have—and it fits into that category I mentioned a few minutes ago of the context within which this bill is being passed—that this government has cut seriously and significantly a lot of the budgets to the

encies out there in communities that will in fact be the agencies called upon to provide some of the treatment and counselling that is obviously going to be needed when and if this bill is passed.

So the question that we have, and that we want to put on the table this afternoon is, is the government going to put that money there? Is the government going to provide? Are they going to replace what they've cut already in the area of mental health services? The member from Prince Edward-Hastings, who spoke from the Liberal caucus just a few minutes ago, talked about a program in his community where the whole mental health budget was cut.

In the context of all this, the bill, first of all, doesn't require them to receive any kind of treatment or counselling, understanding that they need it and will ultimately be sent for treatment and counselling. If the people who are put in charge of making sure this piece of legislation works are going to act responsibly and accountably here, where is the money going to come from if it's already been cut? Is the government willing to commit today, as they speak on this time allocation motion, to making sure the money is in place, that those services are in place and that at the end of the day these young people don't become victims once more, this time victims of the system that takes them off the street, gives them a glimmer of hope, perhaps, or some encouragement and then drops them such that they have no choice, after they've been through the system, than to end up back on the street again? That's a real concern. It's a concern for me and a concern for my caucus.

I'm just getting a little drink of water here. I'm getting little dry.

Second, we're concerned that this bill may override the Child and Family Services Act, where there are already far more effective provisions than this bill provides where it applies to youth under the age of 16. That's a concern. The government claims that a wide range of services would be provided, including drug and alcohol counselling, specialized legal services, medical services, mental health services and counselling services. Yet this government has cut budgets to agencies serving at-risk youth; underfunded legal aid; cut funding to schools, which allowed counselling and other support services to youth; reduced welfare payments; and attacked, underfunded and undermined programs that help low-income families and their children. There's nothing, including in the budget last week Monday, which indicates this government is moving any time soon to replace or replenish any of the services they've cut. So we have some real concerns here.

Last year we heard the government move forward, for example, on a provision that people in jails be tested for drug abuse, with the proviso, I would assume, that those folks would end up in some treatment centre somewhere. But those of us who are any way plugged into our communities or who represent our communities or understand the needs of our communities know those services aren't here for people who have indicated, even right now, that

they want or need the counselling and treatment that are necessary.

So if, as this government has suggested, you take a group out of the prison system and put them in line for these services, and now you start taking young people off the street who are out there prostituting themselves because you want to do the right thing, and you do that, and you say you're going to get them the counselling, support and legal aid they require, and when they get there, there's a lineup a mile long, how effective do you really think this legislation is going to be? How long is it going to take before people become really cynical about all of this and the ability of government, through passing laws, to actually respond to and deal with some of the very difficult and real challenges that are presented out there in communities?

So I have some real concerns, our caucus has some real concerns where that is concerned, about whether we're going to be effective at the end of the day or whether we will yet again, as we've done before over the last seven years in this place, hold out a vine, a blade of grass, to some people who are hanging by their fingernails to some hope and then only have that hope dashed because the services, the support network and the foundation aren't in place upon which this could have some hope of being successful.

Just to give you a little example of why I'm cynical about this government's commitment to actually putting the resources in place—there's nothing so obvious in this province right now as the poverty that those who are disabled are living under, who are dependent on the Ontario disability support program for their income. We made that case to the government a week ago Thursday. We got overwhelming support from this side of the House. We got two or three members of the government who have obviously heard from their constituents—some 129,000 people across this province living on between \$11,000 and \$12,000 as a single person, who are disabled through no fault of their own, living some \$7,000 to \$8,000 below the poverty line. There ought to be no argument from anybody that that is the truth and those are the circumstances and conditions under which those people are living, and yet this government says no. When I bring in a very modest proposal that their income be tagged to the cost of living, which would cost them some 2% to 3% for this year, and then every April 1 in ensuing years the income of disabled people in this province would be increased by the increase in the cost of living, the government says no.

If the government is saying no in that very clear and obvious case, what gives any of us any confidence they're going to understand when they pass this bill that they're going to require some significant and serious investment of dollars in a whole host of services: agencies serving at-risk youth; legal aid; schools so they can provide counselling and other supports to youth; welfare payments to poor families so that children don't find themselves even thinking about the possibility of prostituting themselves in order to cover some of the costs they

and their family are not able to meet? That's just a short list of some of the difficulties out there that are directly attached to and need to be dealt with if this bill is going to be effective in any way.

On introduction of the bill, the Attorney General said, "It is a big step forward toward giving children a chance at a better life. Ontario's children deserve nothing less." This province's education system would serve Ontario's children very well and give all children a chance at a better life if the government hadn't created a crisis in the system to the point where we're not sure any more. As a matter of fact, some of the statistics that are coming out now where school is concerned for young people—and perhaps this is one of the reasons some young people find themselves with no other alternative but to end up on the street—is that a whole lot of the people who were being served by the school system when they had the three areas in it: the advanced, the general—I forget the exact names of them. But there were the young people going to school, who were quite bright, going off to college and university. There were those in the general who in many instances ended up in apprenticeships or going out to work after high school; then you had a group of young people who were at a lower level going to school in the hope they would at least get some skills that would get them into some training programs so they could take advantage of some of the jobs in industries out there that would be in need of them.

1720

What we're finding now, with the change in the emphasis in education and the push to excel that's there, and the reduction of the amount of time we're allowing young people to complete high school, is that there's a whole whack of young people dropping out, more than ever before. The statistics are shocking. They're very troubling. We have indeed created a crisis in our education system. That crisis, I suggest, will produce in the long haul a significant increase in the number of young people whom we will find in the street, either begging or selling themselves in order to make ends meet. That's really tragic, and that's a direct result of some of the initiatives and the cuts in spending of this government.

They expect us to be happy, confident and sure in supporting them in this piece of legislation that, yes, at its core I think probably has some value in it, because there's nobody, as the member for Kitchener Centre said a few minutes ago, who has children who doesn't understand. If their children end up out on the street and they want to get them off the street, they want to be able to call somebody and say, "Listen, could you go and get my daughter," and know they're going to have the power to go and do that, "so we can sit down and have a talk about this?" There's nobody who would disagree that, in those circumstances, we need to be able to do that.

But in the wider context, if there are children out there being pushed into that because they no longer find the kind of support and opportunity in place in the schools, or if they find in their families, that because of circum-

stances beyond their control there isn't the money to meet the basic needs of that family and they're pushed into the only thing, perhaps, they think they can do—which is to get into prostitution or working at some of these clubs that are unseemly and exploitative—what are we going to do about that? What are we going to do to stop the flow of people who seem to have, in many instances, no other choice but to go to the street and participate in that activity?

Then of course on the other end, once you've contacted them, taken them off the street and you've realized they have some difficulties that need to be addressed, where are we going to find the money and the services, if a lot of those services have been either cut back or eliminated completely, to deal with the aftermath of some of this? Where are the judges going to send these kids for the treatment they need?

I'm sure there is time left for some government members to speak to this. They could talk to me a bit about that. What are you going to do in the area of families and children living in poverty? What are you going to do on the other end when a judge determines that what a young person needs is a certain level of intervention, treatment and counselling, and if that treatment and counselling either aren't there or they've got to get in line, and that line is a year or two or three? We know that, if that's the case, in the meantime they may end up back on the street again.

What are we going to do about an education system that's failing a number of kids in a certain category who are no longer finding themselves either welcome or supported in their effort to be the best they can possibly be? There are lots of difficulties here. There are lots of questions that need to be answered.

Ending sexual exploitation of children is admirable provided all other policies are in sync—appropriate sentencing, independent inquiry, into the Cornwall situation, for example, that this government seems to be so shy to move forward on, and police forces with suitable resources. The member for Niagara Centre continually brings into this House the reality that we have less police on the streets today than we had in 1995. Even at that very basic level, what are we going to do if we call the police to search for a child on the street in prostitution when those police officers are already overextended, trying to do the work they've already got on their plates?

So as New Democrats we're sympathetic with the motive behind the bill. Who doesn't want to protect the most vulnerable in our society? We're talking about child prostitutes, about young men and women who are exploited, abused, victimized by johns, by the strip clubs they work in, by the pornographic film industry. We all want to find some way to intervene and protect these young people from that incredibly dangerous and repugnant world. That's why New Democrats have taken this bill and its predecessor very seriously. We participated in the public hearings around the original private member's bill. We indicated when this bill was introduced and reintroduced that we were eager to see the bill go to committee.

Alas, now that it's gone to committee, we find that the government really wasn't serious when they said they wanted to hear from us, they wanted it to be a non-partisan event or initiative and that they were willing to do whatever was required to make sure that at the end of the day it would be effective and do what we all thought had the potential to do.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I'm particularly pleased to be able to join in this debate on this very serious issue because I believe it needs to be said that ensuring the safety and security of children has always been a very top priority for the Progressive Conservative government, and certainly for me personally. To put that into some context, I have been an elected official both at the municipal and the provincial levels for the last 20 years. I think one of the most pervasive issues to affect society has been one of attacks on vulnerable people, especially children. Supporting vulnerable people in our society I believe is one of the most responsible things that we can do. In fact, I believe that it is our duty as a government to ensure that.

The proposed legislation that is under debate today could actually help to give the police and children's aid societies the stronger tools that they need to rescue children trapped in the misery of sexual exploitation.

I can recall when I was a councillor in Scarborough a few years ago and we were liaising with the police. One of my colleagues, councillor Harvey Baron, had a particular concern about the exploitation of children through pornography, and a special project had been set up by Toronto police at that time called Project P. There were only four police officers who were charged with looking at this whole area. As I say, this was about 15 years ago. I recall distinctly being invited to attend this particular project. The police were asking us at that time to please, as politicians, as decision-makers, make sure that they had the tools by which to deal with this growing problem.

We know that children as young as the age of 12 are being forced to sell sex in a range of situations. These situations can include, as we've already heard today, street prostitution, adult entertainment facilities, massage parlours, bawdy houses, escort services, telephone or internet sex lines—I know that in itself is almost a new crime that is growing by huge proportions, and of course there's the pornography industry itself.

.730

It's fine to talk about these situations as being adult-dominated, but we have to remember that we're talking about children as young as 12 and, I would suggest, probably younger. I can't envision the horror these young people must go through. What this proposed bill will do is to allow police and children's aid society workers to remove children from these dangerous situations with or without a warrant.

Once these children have been rescued from these terrible situations, they would be placed in a safe, secure location where they would receive the care that is required to help them turn their lives around. Children who have been sexually exploited for profit are usually in

desperate and dire need of care. Many of them have left abusive situations at home only to be further abused at the hands of pimps, johns and others. In addition to being physically, sexually and emotionally abused, they're often addicted to drugs and alcohol and sometimes have sexually transmitted diseases.

While these young people, these children, are in safe, secure locations for up to 30 days, a child can access a range of supports that will include medical services, drug and alcohol counselling, mental health services, education and specialized legal services. I believe the proposed legislation is a further example of this government's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of our children, especially those children who are in need of specialized services.

Since 1995, the government has taken a number of measures to improve the child protection system. I have been particularly pleased to support all of these measures, just as I support the passage of this legislation. This government has increased funding by 130% for child welfare and by more than 28% for children's mental health agencies. It proclaimed new amendments to the Child and Family Services Act, including adding neglect as a factor in determining if a child is in need of protection. The amendments to the Child and Family Services Act make it clear that the needs of children must come first.

As well, more than 1,700 child protection workers have been hired since 1995. That represents an increase of more than 77%. In total, funding for children's services has increased by over 50% since 1995, and that brings the government's total commitment to over \$2 billion a year.

As I mentioned, this government has increased funding by 130% for child welfare, to over \$829 million in 2001-02. The increased funding will help children's aid societies respond to increased service demands and better protect the vulnerable children who are there to be protected.

Ontario's 52 children's aid societies provide a comprehensive range of services that include investigation of child abuse, counselling for families where a child might be at risk, substitute care, such as a foster home or a group home, and protection of children.

Abused women and their children also receive a range of services in women's shelters that include residential support and crisis telephone counselling, as well as supportive and practical counselling to women while in a shelter and after they start their new lives.

As part of the government's initiative to provide crisis telephone counselling, it expanded the assaulted women's help line province-wide. The government is spending \$26 million to create more shelter spaces for women and their children fleeing abusive situations.

We're also spending \$10 million annually on two new programs that will support women and children who have experienced violence. These are the transitional support program for abused women and the early intervention program for children who witness women abuse. These initiatives, along with the bill, which I think has been

debated particularly eloquently today by all three sides of this House, are examples of our government's strong commitment to the well-being of children. I believe it is the responsibility of all of us to share in protecting children and providing the care and services they need in order for them to lead safe, happy, healthy lives. The proposed legislation would help some of our most vulnerable children begin the long journey back to the life they deserve. I urge all members of this House to join me in supporting this bill.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): There are a few things I'd like to say about the debate this afternoon. The motion we are entertaining at the present time relates to Bill 86. Since I haven't had an opportunity to speak to that particular bill, I'm going to focus some of my comments on the intentions and the genesis of the bill. I know the excellent work my colleague from Sudbury, Mr Rick Bartolucci, has put forth with regard to this issue has been mentioned numerous times in the Legislature when the bill was debated, and even this afternoon. I'm very delighted for him. I know him to be a man of great commitment, and certainly a man who's committed to making the world we live in a better place for young people and particularly for children. This is an example of a member who out in the riding had a conversation with an individual and recognized, "Hey, there's something I can do to bring a message to this room, to have a debate about an important issue and to do something that will improve the lives of children in the province." So I congratulate and commend him.

I also commend the members of the government, while I may not necessarily appreciate the journey this piece of legislation has taken. It started with legislation from the member for Sudbury, and I think it would have been more appropriate if it had been his bill that passed into law. However, he's been very generous in his remarks, and his direction as well, that any bill that comes to the Legislature that will benefit children must be supported. We certainly will be supporting Bill 86. So I am happy the government has deigned to recognize that this should be a priority on their agenda and has brought it forward for debate in this way. I think debate is another important issue I'll speak to in a few moments.

I am also aware that members of the third party have spoken very positively about the need for this kind of legislation. They've been able to reference in their own experiences in their ridings as well the need within our communities for our children to be protected in this particular way. I know that Mr Bartolucci is very appreciative of the support that has been offered with regard to this legislation.

1740

I want to make reference very briefly to the victims of this kind of crime. They are children. We tend to think that this sort of activity takes place only in large cities in Ontario, but I know that is not the case. I know that because I've had conversations with colleagues and even with professionals in my riding who say that this insidi-

ous activity is not only to be found in urban centres but in fact found in all parts of the province—another reason why it is so very appropriate that we enact a law. This isn't a municipal responsibility; it is a provincial responsibility to ensure that children across the province are protected and that there are laws to assist police to do what they must do to ensure that a youngster is protected.

I do, however, find that I must speak to the motion that's on the floor this afternoon. It's a motion to allocate time for debate. I think that's very sad, because I think an issue such as this does deserve a full airing. Many members in the Legislative Assembly should have the opportunity to speak to this bill, about the need for it, because what we do here is explain to the people we represent, to the people who watch the legislative channel, the laws that are being entertained or considered in this room, to have them understand that these are issues that need to be dealt with in this legislative process.

More importantly, I want to make a comment about the regularity with which we see the government move time allocation motion. It seems that on every issue—there really hasn't been an issue as important as this one—which directly impacts children in our province. That piece of legislation around Hydro One, for example—all of them are treated in the same way by this government, and that is to move time allocation, which means that the government doesn't want to hear any more from the people who've been elected as local representatives. You are intent on a path, on your mission, as it were, to do only what you think is the right way to go and, unfortunately, debate in this Legislature has become quite redundant. We are regularly called to the room not to debate bills particularly but the time allocation motion. Technically, today we should be talking about why we in fact think we should be talking about the bill a little more. It certainly limits the opportunity that we have, as legislators, to bring out some very good information and perspective on any pending legislation.

So while it certainly is my intention to support Bill 86, because I do think it's good legislation, I think it's important to explain to the people who would be viewing and for the purposes of Hansard that I do not believe in time allocation motions except in extraordinary circumstances. That, of course, is why they are in the standing orders. There are times when it might be appropriate to move a bill through expeditiously. I don't believe that is the case with Bill 86. I believe the bill deserves full debate in the Legislature. I think it's unfortunate. We didn't sit for five months, and now we find ourselves in a situation that, in order to meet the legislative calendar, we're entertaining all kinds of time allocation motions. I have to tell you that when I was elected, it certainly was my hope and desire to be here and to work for the people who sent me at least according to the calendar we were provided. That did not happen.

I think it is unfortunate that again we have another time allocation motion. I will not be able to support the motion, but I am very pleased that I've had the opportunity to speak positively to the bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? Hearing none, I'll put the motion to the House.

Mr Young has moved government notice of motion number 30. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1745 to 1755.

The Deputy Speaker: Members, please take your seats.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

mott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn
aird, John R.	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
arrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John
aubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
hudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
lark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
lement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
oburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Stockwell, Chris
nningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
eFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
unlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
llott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
alt, Doug	McDonald, AL	Wilson, Jim

Gilchrist, Steve

Gill, Raminder

Guzzo, Gary J.

Miller, Norm

Molinari, Tina R.

Munro, Julia

Witmer, Elizabeth

Wood, Bob

Young, David

The Deputy Speaker: Those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Emie
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Komos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Levac, David	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Marchese, Rosario	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	Sorbara, Greg
Curling, Alvin	Martin, Tony	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 48; the nays are 32.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being almost 6 of the clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1758.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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of Ontario
Third Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Troisième session, 37^e législature

Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)

Journal
des débats
(Hansard)

Monday 24 June 2002

Lundi 24 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 24 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 24 juin 2002

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

KEEPING THE PROMISE FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT (2002 BUDGET), 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LE RESPECT DE L'ENGAGEMENT D'ASSURER LA CROISSANCE ET LA PROSPÉRITÉ (BUDGET DE 2002)

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 20, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 109, An Act to implement the measures contained in the 2002 Ontario Budget and to implement other initiatives of the Government of Ontario / Projet de loi 109, Loi mettant en œuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le budget de l'Ontario de 2002 ainsi que d'autres initiatives du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): It is my understanding that the member for Trinity-Spadina has the floor.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): It's good to have time, and plenty of it, to be able to say what you have to say in this place.

It's hard for the Tories. Even when they have an opportunity, they don't speak. So imagine how hard it is for the Tories to be able to get their views out to the public. It's hard, Bart. We, on the other hand, have plenty of time to dissect your budgets as best we can so that the public watching this political program, Monday night, 8:45, watching it live, have an opportunity to watch us have that debate.

Interjection: They're clicking on.

Mr Marchese: Yes, they're clicking on, because it is one of those opportunities they have to watch us, to hear us. How else do they see you? How else do they hear you, except in this place? That's why they want the Tories to be able to get up and speak on the issues, and the budget in particular, because that's what we're talking about tonight.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): If you sit down, we'll be pleased to stand up.

Mr Marchese: Good to see you, Steve, because I've got some things to say to you on the budget that you may or may not like. I don't know.

This is a budget—

Mr Gilchrist: Let's talk about cars made in Brampton.

Mr Marchese: No, I want to talk about the budget. It's such an exquisite budget to talk about; it really is. This is the first budget we have by the former Minister of Education that reveals just how much trouble you folks really are in. This is a budget that says, "We are putting off the income tax cuts for one year." They say in the budget on page 6, because this is where the exquisite part of the politics comes into play, "Our government has pursued an aggressive tax cut plan for one very simple reason. Tax cuts work."

Applause.

Mr Marchese: And the Tories clap for themselves. It works, right?

I'm reminded, of course, by the politics of the Conservative government and the Common Sense Revolution that they say very much the same thing. On page 4 of the Common Sense Revolution it says, "In fact, taxes must be cut if we want to create jobs."

Applause.

Mr Marchese: They clap because they believe it. They believed it then and they believe it now.

So here's my concern that I raised last week, which I will raise again, because I'm not quite sure that some of you were here last week to listen to my remarks.

1850

If tax cuts work, why are you saying on page 6, "In the meantime, because of our short-term fiscal situation, I propose to introduce legislation to delay, for one year only, the current planned reductions in personal income tax"? I don't get it. It's paradoxical in my mind. It may not be in yours, but it is in mine. If you believers, the true-blue ones, believe that tax cuts work, I don't remember one single Conservative soul in the past and/or present saying, "Tax cuts work only some of the time."

Mr Gilchrist: They work all the time.

Mr Marchese: Steve Gilchrist says they work all the time. That's what I remember. I remember every single Tory, past and present, saying, "Tax cuts work all the time." If they work all the time, then putting off tax cuts for one year means they do not work.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Only some of the time? How can you have it both ways when you have consistently, for years, said they work all of the time? The Liberals can have it both ways, but how can you Tories claim the same ground they do? You just can't do it. You either believe in it or you don't. You believed in the past that tax cuts

work, that they would bring prosperity and that tax cuts were the only way—the only way—to increase jobs.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Carried.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, Mr Guzzo. I'm just reaffirming what you believe now and believed then.

But if tax cuts were the only way and are the only way to create prosperity and jobs, why are you putting them off? Clearly because they don't work. But you quite conveniently say, "They do work, but sometimes they don't." Then the former Minister of Education, now finance minister, says, "We will continue with tax cuts because we want to take even more steps to promote prosperity in the province." She believes that tax cuts create prosperity. In the same breath, within the space of 15 seconds in this budget, she says—

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): Rosario, remember this?

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre): It's the budget of 1994.

Mr Marchese: I can't wait to hear it.

Mr Sampson: You wrote it.

Mr Marchese: Maybe you can repeat it for us.

I remember the current Speaker of this House, I remember Mr Stockwell, the Minister of Energy, I remember your former Premier, long gone now, Monsieur Harris. When we had a recession, the Tories used to say about the NDP—David, your former folks used to say to us—"You don't have a revenue problem; you have a spending problem." Chris Stockwell used to say that, and we used to say it was a recession that of course we didn't cause. But the Tories—

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: They're laughing now and they laughed then. They used to laugh then: "No, no, there's no recession. You people just have a spending problem, not a revenue problem." So the recession, of course, was invented by the NDP, caused by the NDP, but in the minds of the Tories it didn't really happen. There was no recession; it was something we just thought up.

So you have the Minister of Finance, the former Minister of Education, saying, "We've got to put off the tax cuts. We have a few problems." You know what the problem is, Mr Banker? September 11. The Minister of Finance says, "We could never really anticipate some of the problems we've had, but September 11 really, really did it."

Mr Sampson: You're catching on.

Mr Marchese: Catching on to what?

Mr Sampson: To the real truth.

Mr Marchese: So September 11 did happen and, of course, it caused the economic misfortune that you're experiencing.

Mr Sampson: And your problem was a recession that didn't happen. Is that the idea?

Mr Marchese: So what do you think, Mr Banker? So we didn't have a recession in 1990, but we did have a September 11 because it happened to you. What hap-

pened to us wasn't real, but what's happening to you real. Do you follow the drift?

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): You'd better go over that again for Hansard.

Mr Marchese: You follow it, right, Garfield? Yes, it's amusing, really—

Mr Sampson: Rosie, your spaceship is outside.

Mr Marchese: No, no. My spaceship went a long time ago. Yours is coming. Yours is coming.

Mr Sampson: Hey, Rosie, ET, please come back.

Mr Marchese: September 11 has caused your economic—

The Deputy Speaker: Take your seat, please.

Mr Sampson: I think we're going to get yelled at.

The Deputy Speaker: No, not yet, but I am going to ask nicely, to start, if everybody would please come to order and give the member an opportunity to make his remarks. Please continue.

Mr Marchese: So September 11 is the cause of all their worries and sins and misfortunes. When they can beat up the federal government, they go back to September 11; when September 11 doesn't work, they beat up the federal government. I've never heard so many Tories whining simultaneously. Every minister who gets up every MPP, whines about the federal Liberals not giving them any money.

Mr Dunlop: Do the math.

Mr Marchese: Garfield, it's true, right? And when we were in government, your members used to say to Bob Rae, "Stop whining." They used to say, "You're not really having a recession. The federal government really hasn't taken billions of dollars away from you. Stop whining, Bob Rae." And here you are, loaded with money coming in, and all of you ministers, all of you standing up day in and day out, attacking Monsieur Chrétien—deservedly so. No, I'm not saying it's undeserving criticism, except I remember because, you see, I was here. I remember. When you find people, those of you looking around, none of you were here in my time. None of you. That's why you don't savour the excitement of these words, because you weren't here.

But if only you had witnessed your former member Stockwell just about here—right about here—when he used to fulminate and he used to spit fire with his eyes and he would say, "Now you guys, you don't have a revenue problem"; he would say, "Stop Bob Rae from whining"—he, the former Speaker, Mike Harris and each and every one of the Tories. I thought Tories were incapable of whining. Surely when you hear them opposition saying to Bob Rae that he shouldn't whine, Tories should ever be in power, God forbid that they should whine. They don't have the ability to whine, I thought. Lo and behold, my God, what a pack of whiners you are, all of you.

So I remind you, when your colleagues who were here in 1990-95 used to say that New Democrats didn't have a revenue problem; we had a spending problem—I ask you today, with all of the good economy you created because you guys are so good, and all these millions and billions

of dollars coming right in, how come you can't balance our budget this year without the harm that it's causing ou politically? Because it's causing you a heck of a lot of damage. But you say, "We've got to balance the budget," right? I'm trying to understand it. You presumably don't have a revenue problem, correct? Because the economy has been good to you, right? But then I say, maybe they have a spending problem, but is it possible that Tories have a spending problem, because these people don't like to spend the taxpayers' money, right?

Mr Sampson: Rosie, we're losing people to the hopping channel.

Mr Marchese: Now hold on, hold on. Let me go through this. Enjoy the moment. Savour it. Put it into your mouth. Grab it and just savour it.

You don't have a revenue problem. That is undisputable because you people love to tell the public how much money you've got. But you don't have a spending problem, correct? You don't have a spending problem, right? So when you say, "We're putting so much money—look—into health: \$1.6 billion"—

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): One point even.

Mr Marchese: One point seven? Right. Is that a pending problem, or is that not a spending problem?

900

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): What do you think it is?

Mr Marchese: If I were to listen to Tories, I would say you have a spending problem on your hands. "You don't have a revenue problem," Stockwell would tell ou, "you've got a spending problem." Right? Otherwise ou'd be able to balance your budget without having to use close to \$500 million on cigarettes. You're putting a 5-a-pack tax on cigarettes. That's four hundred and fifty million bucks you guys have to raise to balance the udget. So what is your problem? Do you have a revenue roblem, a spending problem or a September 11 roblem? What do you have? Is it terminal? I hope not. I ope it's not terminal, because I really would worry if at were so. But you've got to help me: tell me what our problem is.

Ah, Minister of Labour, is it an incompetence problem ou're facing?

Hon Mr Clark: Now you're getting personal.

Mr Marchese: OK. Not revenue, not spending; it's ot to be incompetence, Minister of Labour. Say it like ou mean it.

But when you get up—monsieur Beaubien, tu vas arler après. C'est toi ? Justifie ça pour moi. Parle lairement pour moi et pour les autres qui regardent ce rogramme. Je veux savoir, le public veut savoir, les aisons pour lesquelles vous vous trouvez dans un grand roblème politique-économique.

Interjection.

M. Marchese: N'importe. Parlez-en. Je veux savoir es vraies raisons pour ce problème.

I was just trying to figure out the nature of the problem: not revenue, not spending, and yet they are so immersed in the morass they find themselves in. I believe, good citizens, they are truly incompetent. They are. They have been so for five, six, seven years, for God's sake. But I raise these issues so that you are able to help me understand.

They say, "Tax cuts are always good." Then they say in the same breath, "We've gotta put 'em off." They say, "Tax cuts create jobs." Then, in the same breath, they say, "Not this year." But Ecker says, "Come back next year; we'll bring them back." We've got a revenue problem this year, but we won't have a revenue problem next year?

Hon Mr Clark: Now you've got it.

Mr Marchese: I see, Minister of Labour. Have you got two eyes or one when you speak on this issue?

Hon Mr Clark: Actually, I've got four.

Mr Marchese: You've got four. That's a big help. That really is a big help.

I don't understand you Tories, I really don't. Again, please, you've got to extricate the complexities, the paradoxes, the contradictions. Monsieur Beaubien, tu vas m'aider ? You told me you would. I want to know, because I know the public wants to understand.

I'm saying that if you argue in one consistent manner you cannot be inconsistent in the same breath. You can't be.

Hon Mr Clark: That might come back to haunt you.

Mr Marchese: To haunt me? No, it's going to haunt you. I didn't say, "Tax cuts work," and then, "Stop them." I didn't say that, as Stockwell used to say. You said it. I'm not saying it; you're saying it.

Hon Mr Clark: Are you sure? I want you to remember what you just said.

Mr Marchese: Am I sure? It's not what I said; I did vote against your income tax. I'm telling you that we New Democrats say consistently that when you cut income taxes, you take billions away from provincial coffers in a way that you could only devastate your social infrastructure, in the ways people have seen.

What is that social infrastructure? You've cut in health by the billions. You've cut in education by the billions. You've cut in natural resources—you fired thousands of workers from the Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources. We told you the consequences of cutting taxes would mean you would devastate our social services. You can't have it both ways. You thought you could, Monsieur Beaubien, but it's coming back to you. It's grabbing you in ways you just don't like.

And do you know what? Staving off, putting off tax cuts is hurting you on Bay Street. It really is, I understand from a poll here: "In the report card, chief executives of large, medium-sized and small businesses gave the Eves-led Tory government failing marks—47% and 45% respectively—for its decision to delay tax cuts for businesses and households." It must grab you here when you hear that.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Minister of Labour, I know you're getting whacked by the big boys on Bay. You see, they were arguing, "We're making all these decisions based on these tax cuts." They thought, "It's coming," and then you said, "No, it's not coming." I imagine you must be feeling strangled.

Look at your Tory—no, Alliance—supporters. I met one of your former staffers, whom I shall not name, who said to me, interestingly, "Do you remember when our government used to say, 'We're going to give people a hand up'? The government is now giving people a handout," which is another paradox. They used to say, "We're going to give you a hand up," and now they're going to give you a handout. So he said, "I'm leaving for the Alliance." I said, "God bless. Godspeed."

So I say to myself, "The Tories are really hurting on this one. If this guy's leaving"—he was there with someone I didn't recognize—"there must be a couple of hundred at least or a couple dozen at least here in Ontario who are saying, 'Holy moly, they've changed direction. What gives? Do we have to find another party in Ontario?'" Of course you can't find another party. You're stuck. The poor Alliance types are stuck.

I know you're hurting. I know some of you are saying, "I just hope we can hold on to that nice Alliance, strong right Tory vote. I hope we can hold on to it," as you try to squeeze the Liberals a little bit by saying, "We're going to hold off on the tax cuts," because that's what the Liberals called for. We always called for it permanently, but they change their minds from time to time.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Well, in the last election in 1999 they said they were against tax cuts but they wouldn't touch it if they got elected. This time they said they would cut the \$2 billion worth of income tax and corporate tax cuts. So you guys are trying to squeeze the Liberals a little bit, thinking, "If we do what they say and squeeze them a couple of per cent," just a teeny little bit, as the Minister of Labour is indicating to me, "then we could squeeze back into electoral victory." The Liberals are unnerved by what you're doing. They are. I find it terribly amusing.

The problem you've got is that you're getting squeezed by your ultra-conservative types, and the Liberals are getting squeezed by your moving into that territory. They're in a quandary, but so are you. That's the beauty of it all. That's what's so beautiful and amusing to watch, this kind of panorama of politics as it goes around. I love to see it, because you see the squirming that's going on in here. You do. Don't you see the squirming? I see it and it's beautiful.

These corporate types are really unhappy with you guys because they believed you would cut taxes, and they planned—and then. But here's my problem: your reliance on the private sector to fix all the ills of the world is not working. I can see that your grandification of the chief boys who manage these corporations is just wrong. It's not working.

It didn't work, did you notice, in the past six months to a year? Jean Monty, the chairman and CEO of Bell Canada Enterprises, did his shareholders the immense good service of quitting because, man, did those shares plummet severely. Those shareholders were severely hurt by what went on in that company. These are the people you put on a pedestal. You say, "They're like gods who can do no wrong. They will bring you money unlike anything you've ever seen before. Trust them." The same CEO who give you guys the bread are failing. They're falling down, all of them—like Enron, falling down. Then you've got the other CEO from Nortel, John Roth, who was named CEO of the year. He presided over the single largest loss in Canadian corporate history. This godlike reliance on these big chiefs is not working. They're falling apart, and all of the greed and incompetence should show the public that you can't rely on the private sector to fix your problems, that you have to rely on the state to protect you when these CEOs break down and bring the shareholders with them.

1910

I say to the public, when this government is interested in selling off Hydro One—now, not completely. Prior to a ruling very recently that said, "You can't sell off Hydro One"—God bless that judge—the government came back, read the pulse and said, "If we sell off Hydro One, we're in big political trouble. What do we do?" So you guys huddled in those caucus meetings and decided you can't sell it off completely.

What are they going to do, though? Michael, they're going to sell off 49%. "We're not going to sell off 51%—we're going to sell off 49% to bring private sector discipline," the same discipline of Jean Monty, CEO of Bell Canada Enterprises, that brought the company down; the same discipline that CEO of Nortel John Roth brought to his company that brought the company and shareholders down; Enron, the same company that manipulated energy in a way to make money—all about greed. He came down and brought thousands of people with him.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Arthur Andersen.

Mr Marchese: Arthur Andersen, the accounting firm worldwide famous, was part of that plot to undermine us as a people. They can't do things honestly and so they get caught and they collapse and they come down. What this government wants to do is bring the private sector discipline into Hydro One, where they would sell half of Hydro One—not half, 49%—and bring this type of private market discipline that has collapsed so many corporations and so many chiefs of these companies. That's the kind of discipline you want to bring into Ontario?

They proudly mock the opposition when they say, "We're not selling Hydro One. We're only selling 49%." We've got 2% ownership over the private sector but we're not going to let the private sector control us. Oh no, the government will control it, because we'll have 51% and the private sector will only have 49%. Don't you worry, taxpayers. Don't worry about rates going up.

he private sector isn't there to make money for its shareholders; they wouldn't do that. They're there to ring private sector discipline to help you out—not to suck you dry of your money but to help you out." That's why the Tories want to bring it in.

The private sector is there to suck up the money like there is no tomorrow. That's why they're there: sucking up as if there's no tomorrow; private sector discipline as they suckle away, forever and ever; tucking the profits into their pockets as they bring private sector discipline.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Mr Banker, they don't like you anymore.

Listen, it could be that it's all part of a game, where the bankers pretend, "We're upset. We're really upset. We're going to do a poll and we're going to help the government out by saying we're really upset. Oh, boy, all the money we're going to lose and all the jobs that will disappear. We've got to help them out by telling the public we're in trouble, we're hurting. We hate them." That could be part of a good plot, but I don't know. Who knows? My sense is that they will survive without you. They made lots of money before and they'll continue making lots of money with or without you.

Mr Beaubien: What's your point?

Mr Marchese: What's my point? Monsieur Beaubien, il te plaît.

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: My point is, you've got a fiscal fiasco in your hands. You've \$8 billion going out because of our tax cuts and you're in trouble, you're tight. Now Ernie Eves says, "We've got to sound a bit like the liberals," because he's smart. He knows. He's in here for the long haul, I think, and he says, "I want to win an election. What do I do? I'm squeezed. I don't have enough money. I want to put a couple of bucks back into health without letting the people know that I'm a big spender. I've got to put some more money back into education—we're in trouble—without letting people know we're big spenders. We've got to put some money back into environment, because people died at Walkerton, without appearing like we're big spenders. We really are about people" kind of thing. Then they say, "But we don't have any money. What do we do?" Two things: the tax on cigarettes to raise a couple of dollars. "We'll sell Hydro One—49%, mind you, not more, because otherwise we can't tell the public we still run it."

My point, Monsieur Beaubien, is that you're in trouble. That's all I was saying to you. It's not as if I'm saying to you that I'm not happy with the fact that you cut off the income tax cuts. I am happy you're putting them off. I really am. I'm not happy just for me; I'm happy for all Ontario, because if you hadn't done holding off those tax cuts, you guys would have had to cut health gain, education again, natural resources again, environment again, Ministry of Labour again, culture again, senior citizens and social services again and again. You aid to yourself, "Look, we hurt these people so much, we can't hurt them again. They're not going to take it." It

wouldn't show well on Ernie Eves, the Premier, if he didn't do this, because he's got a heart.

Remember that he said he's got a heart?

Mr Prue: He said that.

Mr Marchese: He did say that. He says he's not an ideologue. He's neither right nor left. All these six years, I don't know where he was, but he must have had his heart hidden tightly in that jacket.

But Ernie needs to show the public he cares about people, he cares about health. It was a mistake committed by Mike Harris, but not he, the Treasurer, no. When he was Treasurer, not he. He must have been directed like a puppet, like a marionette, and presumably he had no choice. Le pauvre Monsieur Eves had no choice on that one. He was directed by Harris to make all the cuts to education, health, senior citizens, water, culture. Poor guy, because deep down he really had a heart and it's showing now. The big spender, Ernie Eves, is showing.

I'm just telling you that I'm happy you guys put off those taxes. I am. Other people may not want to say so, but I do. I want to tell you that I think you people have restored some sanity—because I think you're all lunatics—but some sanity has been restored, and I think it speaks well of you guys. You guys are recovering some of the sanity that may have existed prior to you getting to office. I don't know. But I want to say to the taxpayers of Ontario watching, at least these people may be on their way to becoming sane, and that's a good thing, not a bad thing. But then I look at the budget and I say, if these people are moving to sanity, why would they do an insane thing of the sort I'm about to articulate?

On page 18, the minister says, "I am pleased to announce the creation of the student achievement fund. This \$20-million fund will begin by providing \$5,000 to every elementary school principal whose school meets or exceeds its student literacy goals in grade 3." Twenty-five million bucks and it's going to go to schools that meet or exceed the standardized test. All of you Tories know, because you've been around; you don't have to be teachers to know this really—this is class-based, "class" meaning if you are here, professional and you've got money, that class will help you and help your children do better in school. If by class you are at the bottom end, where you don't have the same level of academic achievement and you are unfortunately not so rich, that means your kids are likely not to do well in school.

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So this Minister of Education, a former teacher, a trustee, allowed herself to be hoodwinked by a previous Minister of Education to allow \$25 million to go out—where? To schools where the kids are rich, where the kids come from professional homes. The kids who really need help, who may not pass the standardized tests, don't get any money.

I say to you, taxpayers, they might be restoring some sanity—even though I've always believed they're lunatics—but on this issue I say I don't really know. How could they pretend to help all the schools by giving an incentive to the rich little boys and girls who come from

rich homes, who get money—for what purpose, no one knows—but the children who are in desperate need of a Tory hand up get nothing?

I am not convinced that they are on that road to sanity. So, taxpayers, I worry for me, I worry for you, I worry for us all because I don't know what they're doing. I think they are seriously incompetent, have been for seven years and are likely to continue. The only way to restore sanity in this province is by booting them out. It's the only way. This budget won't do it. You've got to boot them out, and the way to do it is you've got to get involved electorally, you've got to vote and you've got to canvass to get these people out.

The Deputy Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions or comments.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I am pleased to respond to the member for Trinity-Spadina tonight. I listened with great interest to his speech. He provoked me to go to the legislative library tonight because I wanted to find out, to go back to what the NDP budgets of the past were.

So I went to the legislative library and asked for the 1994 budget. You may recall this budget, Mr Speaker. I got to page 3 of the budget. The budget was brought forward on May 5, 1994, by Floyd Laughren, who was then Minister of Finance. Much to my surprise, there's a head in here which says, "Cutting Taxes to Create Jobs."

It says, "The economy has been growing, but employment has been lagging. Small- and medium-sized businesses—which are the biggest generators of jobs in the economy—have told us that payroll taxes can stand in the way of new hiring."

They say one thing in here. For the last seven years we have been listening to the NDP saying that tax cuts are the worst thing that has ever happened in this province. I say, tell that to the 880,000 people who are now working in this province as a result of the sound economic policies that have been brought forward.

You look at the third sentence of the budget. It says, "This budget cuts taxes to encourage companies to hire new workers." It goes on. I was absolutely in disbelief when I read this budget. The member now is saying he's against tax cuts. Now he's saying that he actually could have voted for this budget because it would have cut taxes.

The budget from 1994 also said they were "on target to balance our operating budget by 1998." Thank God they never got the chance to be in office at that time. The other point is, "This budget contains no new taxes and no tax increases." That was Floyd Laughren's budget in 1994.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I am pleased to respond to the member for Trinity-Spadina. I listened carefully to his presentation over the course of the last couple of days of debate. I want to follow up on one thing he said. He said this evening that he thought the government was in trouble. Those were his exact words.

I happen to believe him. I think this government is in trouble. It's in trouble for a variety of reasons, the most

important of which is that the people of Ontario are paying far greater attention to how this government manages than they've ever done before over the course of the last seven years. The people of Ontario are now tuned in to this government, so they'll want to read page 65 of the government's budget this year to find out that the government is paying more money to pay down the public debt interest than they are to provide programs for social services. They're paying 14 cents—

Mr Guzzo: Whose fault is that?

Mr Bartolucci: The member for Ottawa asks whose fault it is. I want to tell the people of Ontario that it's the government's fault. It's the Harris-Eves government's fault, because they've increased the public debt by \$21 billion and they might want to find that on page 106 of the budget. So, because they've increased the public debt by \$21 billion, they're now forced to spend 14 cents of every dollar in paying down the debt they helped to create. That certainly is not acceptable.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm going to ask the government benches to please show a little more respect for the speakers. There's far too much heckling. It's way beyond just the norm. Please calm down a bit.

Mr Prue: I am amazed to see the number of people who are sitting opposite here tonight. There are about four or five of us here on the opposition bench but it is full over there.

I've only got a couple of minutes. I'd like to speak to what I think are two of the major things.

It's always entertaining to listen to my colleague from Trinity-Spadina. First of all he talked about September 11. I think we need to talk a little bit about September 11 and the role it has played, or not played, in this economy. Quite frankly, almost every reputable economist has said that although there were very worrying and troubling times in the weeks and maybe the month or two that followed September 11, in the whole grand scheme of things it has not had the economic impact that people purport. I would say to the Minister of Finance, if she were here, that is not really a good excuse for what is happening around this budget. The effects of September 11, although enormous on our psyche, have been really quite insignificant on the economy of this country.

The second point he talked about, which has just been raised again by the member Bartolucci, was about the trouble this party finds itself in, and I have to agree. I watched it most carefully the other day, sitting there in the general government committee. We had people come who were angry at the government over the bill dealing with Hydro. They were extremely angry with the government. Speaker after speaker spoke against it. What was most important: I expected all the usual range of people to be unhappy, but what really got me were three eloquent speakers who came, who previously were on the government's side, who are now very angry with the government for backing off Hydro. Now I'm glad you did, but I had to watch three of your keenest, biggest supporters ever come there and castigate you. You are now between a rock and a hard place.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Scarborough East.

Mr Gilchrist: When the member for Trinity-Spadina stands up, of course it draws a big crowd. It's a shame there aren't any opposition members here to listen to you. But I appreciate the reference from Mr Prue to the work this demonstrated by members of the government.

You always raise so many issues when you stand up and speak, mostly because you have a difficult time staying on topic, but I must challenge your suggestion that this budget perpetuates cuts in health care. How repoterous. You know that. You know we're adding \$1.7 billion, and it doesn't matter how you split \$1.7 billion; that's a lot of new equipment, a lot of nurses, a lot of nurse practitioners, a lot of expanded hospitals.

You suggested this budget was one more in a series of cuts to public education. You know, member opposite, that over half a billion dollars was added to public education in this budget.

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But perhaps most troubling in the representations made by the member for Trinity-Spadina, a member of a party that has 9% of the seats in the Legislature. How fitting to see a poll published by Léger and Léger this week that found that 54% of respondents here in Ontario believe that North American-made cars are best, 25% believe that Japanese cars are best and only 8% believe that European cars are best.

To the member opposite, I know it's a very difficult, perhaps arcane economic theory that the more we buy Ontario-made products, the more jobs we create, the more money circulates in the economy, the four-to-five multiplier effect. I want to congratulate the member for his stimulus to the German economy these last few days, but I want to point out to you that had you bought a car or a van built in Windsor or in Brampton or Oshawa, you would have done far more for the workers in this province. I'm disappointed, member for Trinity-Spadina.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Trinity-Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr Marchese: Thank you, friends and foes. This is the first time I've ever heard a member of the Conservative Party speak against the North American free trade agreement and worldwide trade agreements. I can't believe it. It would be fair to say that New Democrats oppose the North American free trade agreement and the worldwide opening up of borders. It's true to say that, but for you, Gilchrist from Scarborough East, to say that you want to close down the borders—I don't get it. Whatives? Are you saying you want to close the borders and you just want a made-in-Canada car?

Mr Gilchrist: Ontario-made cars create more jobs.

Mr Marchese: Even Ontario-made, not even in Canada. You want to close the borders here in Ontario. He goes beyond saying, "Open up borders." He's saying we just want to close the borders here in Ontario. Steve. I suspect even some of your own friends drive Jettas.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Will? Where's Will? Does he drive a Jetta too?

Listen, I don't want to get off topic, Speaker. I've just got a couple of things to say.

The New Democrats said there would be no new taxes. Why? Because, when the economy was picking up, just at the time when we could have done a whole lot of good, these people come in and they just suck out billions of dollars by giving it away to corporations and wealthy Ontarians who don't really need it. They're proud of the fact that they say that tax cuts work. If they worked, you would not have put off the tax cuts in this budget. Clearly they don't work. Just say that. Admit it and make me feel better. It's comical to hear you people say, "September 11 has made us tremble." It's comical. Please, recover some of the sanity that you desperately need.

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for further debate.

Mr Beaubien: I'll be sharing my time with the member for Peterborough and the member for Kitchener Centre.

I must admit that it is quite an act to follow the member for Trinity-Spadina. Mon ami, il est très difficile de suivre ce soir.

Anyway, the member for Trinity-Spadina was saying they're fundamentally opposed to tax cuts. Well, we are fundamentally in favour of tax cuts. That's why I want to take a moment to talk about the program spending initiative proposed in the 2002 budget, namely Bill 109. Let me tell you that since 1995, 893,000 people are working because of tax cuts. Our tax cuts for people will allow taxpayers to keep more of their hard-earned income. A family of four with a \$60,000 net income, earned by two working people, will save \$2,005 this year. I don't think this is anything to sneeze at. Also, the real take-home pay has increased by 18.5% since 1995.

I know there are an awful lot of different opinions with regard to tax cuts. The member for Trinity-Spadina was saying that this government is incompetent because we deferred the tax cuts. Well, for the past seven years, I've heard the members of the opposition say that we were incompetent because we were implementing tax cuts. Now they're saying that because we're deferring tax cuts for one year, we are still incompetent. So I'm somewhat confused with regard to some of his comments.

Also, he mentioned the tax on cigarettes. Well, in 1996 the provincial sales tax on cigarettes was tied to the federal sales tax. So if there was a tax increase at the federal level, there was an automatic tax increase at the provincial level. Recently, as we all know, the federal government did increase the taxes on cigarettes by \$3.50 a package. So this government did take the initiative, in conjunction with the governments of Quebec and New Brunswick, to increase the taxes to \$5. To say that we totally increased the taxes by \$5—we increased them by \$1.50 over and above what the feds had increased.

He also mentioned the private sector fixing all the ills of the world. I don't think anybody can fix all the ills of the world. I think we all have a role to play with regard to fixing the ills of the world. The private sector certainly plays a role.

Let me talk about some of the programs that we're sponsoring and financing with the 2002 budget.

Let's talk about health care. Health care has been a very interesting subject for many people in the past seven years. There's no doubt that there is more money spent in health care today than there has ever been; there is going to be almost \$25.5 billion. However, I would caution people that just because we are increasing the level of spending in health care does not mean that the services are always increasing at the same level.

I happen to have worked in the health care field a number of years ago. I had the opportunity to work at the Sarnia General Hospital and at the Strathroy-Middlesex hospital as a medical laboratory technologist, and 35 years ago people were saying that there was not enough money in the health care system. It has been talked about for the past 35 years and probably longer than that. Will there ever be enough money in the health care system? If we're going to gauge how good our system is by the amount of money we spend in the system, I think we're taking the wrong measurements. Instead, we should start measuring the quality of the health care system by its output and outcome, not the input.

Just to give you an example as to what we have been doing with regard to the health care initiative, we've increased the number of MRI machines from 12 to 43 in the past seven years. There are also 20,000 new long-term-care beds coming on stream. We've increased the funding for cardiac care, which enabled an additional 61,000 heart procedures since 1995.

Dialysis services are now available to 3,240 people. I would like to point out also that you should talk to Pat Davis of Wallaceburg, who is a constituent assistant of mine who happens to be on a dialysis machine. Prior to this government being placed in power, this man used to have to travel to London to be dialysed. Now he can do it on his own at his home every night. I'm sure the quality of life for this particular individual is much better than it was five years ago.

We're moving forward with initiatives to meet the health care needs of northern and rural Ontario, which have experienced a severe shortage of physicians and nurses. In my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, let me assure you that we have a fairly high proportion of nurse practitioners working in the health care centres in Forest, Grand Bend and in the small hospital in Newbury. There's no doubt that nurse practitioners can provide a high percentage of the primary health care needs of people in Ontario. I know there are some conflicts with the Ontario Medical Association when it comes to nurse practitioners, but I think as a government we have to increase our initiatives to provide more nurse practitioners in rural Ontario and certainly in northern Ontario.

While we're recognizing the need for more capital investment, we also recognize that there is a need to improve how it is invested, where it is invested and the timelines of investments. For instance, let's talk about new treatments, new drugs, new technologies, and of course, if I look in this House, an aging population. I

think we're a perfect carbon copy of this in this House. Certainly there is an increase in expectations and pressures for consumer choice and increasing costs beyond the ability of the province to undertake on its own.

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That's my segue with regard to the role of the federal government. I think in 1976 the Canada Health and Social Transfer Act was developed. If I recall, at that time the costs were to be split 50-50. There is no doubt that life, society, the health care needs and the social needs of people have changed since 1976. However, the level of funding from the federal government has not increased; it has decreased.

Just to go back prior to 1995, where they were spending about 18% or 18 cents per dollar on health care today I think we're spending in the neighbourhood of slightly over 14%. It would be nice to go back to the original agreement. To say that we have a problem with health care and it's synonymous with or unique to Ontario I don't think is very fair. I think we should look at what is happening in the other provinces. I remember being at a conference last year and Neil LeBlanc, who is the Minister of Finance for Nova Scotia, said that if they keep spending at the present rate on their health care costs, within five years they will be spending 100 cents of every dollar on health care. I don't think this is what we want in Ontario. I'm sure that's not what the people in Nova Scotia want. I'm sure and hopeful that the Romanow report is going to give us a hand in this, but hopefully the federal government will also realize that they have a role to play.

Let's talk briefly about education. In my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, we've probably had more small school and rural and urban school closings than any riding in Ontario. We keep hearing that there is not enough money; there is not enough money for books; there is not enough money for special education. However, with the Lambton-Kent school board in the past year, \$1 million was spent on tracks. There is no doubt that I believe in athletics. However, I think there are priorities. If there is no money for books and we have money for tracks, I wonder where the priorities are.

To give you some of the initiatives with regard to education, we're going to be spending \$200 million to double the local priorities grant from \$100 to \$200 per student. We're also going to be spending \$86 million for enrolment growth. I'm sure the board in Lambton-Kent would love to qualify for this particular grant, because they have been having some problems and difficulties. With the decreasing enrolment in the past six or seven years, they've probably lost close to 8,000 students. That is a travesty. There is no doubt about that. It's an issue we have to deal with. This is why this government has appointed Dr Mordechai Rozanski to look at the funding formula, to make sure that small rural schools in Ontario and northern Ontario are treated equitably.

We're also spending \$23 million to assist declining school boards. We're also spending another \$23 million for school transportation and another \$15 million for the

earning opportunities grant to help students who are at greater risk of not achieving their educational goals. This government is living up to its responsibility with regard to the education needs of people.

It's too bad that my colleague from Trinity-Spadina is not here, because I have one disappointment that I have to raise with regard to the budget, and that refers to the tax credit for independent and Christian schools. This is an issue that I strongly believe in. I know that we have deferred this tax for one year, but hopefully we will see it reinstated at the same level it would have been next year when it is introduced in the budget.

With regard to post-secondary school, we're certainly taking many initiatives by providing fairness and equity. The province is providing \$16 million annually, with \$10 million targeted to colleges in the north and those serving rural communities. I would imagine the \$10 million, hopefully, will apply to small colleges like Lambton College and St Clair College. There's no doubt they are challenged because of their location, because of their enrolment and sometimes the lack of enrolment. However, those small colleges do play a very important role in the community. They have to be funded properly, and I am certainly happy to see that we are providing \$10 million in order to prop them up.

There will also be new funding of \$11 million in 2002-03 to meet the skills shortages. We've heard before—and I agree with my colleague from Chatham-Kent. Not too long ago he was quoted in the newspaper with regard to the provincial government not doing enough for training. He's absolutely, 100% right. However, I think he has to take it a little further, that skills training is not only a responsibility of the provincial government, it is a responsibility of the federal government and the provincial government, and municipal governments have a role to play in it; and certainly the private sector and the corporate sector have a major role to play. So again, when we talk about pointing the finger at one group, I think we have to be balanced. Many organizations and many levels of government play a role in providing proper education and training.

We also will be expanding the apprenticeship system. The government is providing \$5 million in 2002-03, which will be growing to \$25 million by the year 2005-06. These new investments to expand apprenticeship will be especially valuable to those youths who do not go on to college or university or who find themselves unemployed.

Let's talk about guidance teachers for a minute. You talk to people and they will tell you that there is a lack of properly skilled and trained people; that the average age of the construction worker is 47 to 49 years old. I think we all have a role to play in this; as a guidance teacher, who should point out at an early age that there are other alternatives to colleges and universities and to being a doctor, to being a teacher and to being a politician. There is nothing wrong with being a skilled machinist; there is nothing wrong with being a skilled labourer; there is nothing wrong with being a skilled carpenter. These are

good trades, they are well-paid trades, and we should encourage young people to enter into those trades because Ontarians do need new skills to use new technologies found everywhere in the workplace.

Talking about new skills, I look at the money the provincial government, along with St Clair College and the corporate sector, invested in Wallaceburg in the Burgess School of Technology, where they train people as machinists for the auto industry. The Burgess school has been training people probably for the past 30 to 35 years. However, the equipment was outdated. Their headquarters were not adequate. Consequently, an addition was put on to the local high school. People are benefiting. As far as I'm concerned, this is money very well spent.

Let's talk about the environment. I know we are all concerned with the tragedy that occurred in Walkerton. But when we look at the regulations that are in place today—let's look at regulation 459, a very stringent regulation for water quality. However, if there is a fallout in the system, if somebody is not doing their job, doing the proper tests at the proper time, the same situation can occur. Yes, the Minister of the Environment does play a major role. Yes, they must be very aggressive in enforcing the regulations we have in place. But again, the average worker—the person who takes the test, the person who reads the test, the person who reports the test—must do their job diligently also.

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Another initiative with regard to the farm community that I'm very happy to hear about is that this government will be exempting the 14.3-cent tax per litre on biodiesel. That has to be good news to the farming community, because bio-diesel, I think, is the fuel of the future, it's a fuel that many corn producers support, and I'm sure that it's going to help them with marketing their corn products.

Another initiative that I'm glad to see this government has undertaken is to give the municipalities the flexibility to reduce the tax rates from 25% to a lower rate to help the farming community. I think the farming community does need some help, especially the ones that are in the commodity fields. I think it's up to the municipality, because it's more responsive; it knows the difficulties that the farmers are having. Giving them the option to reduce the tax rates from 25% to a lower rate will give farmers a small break with regard to maybe overcoming some of the difficulties they've encountered in the past couple of years.

As a result, I feel that this government has implemented a comprehensive and far-reaching tax reform system over the years, and I know that we have been criticized for deferring some of the taxes. But we also have to realize that these taxes are deferred for one year, and 88% of the small businesses will still benefit from the tax cut implemented by this government.

Also briefly, I would like to talk about a document here that I have in front of me. It talks about cutting taxes to create jobs and it talks about a new Ontario Hydro and

a revitalized WCB, a competitive tax system that avoided up to 40,000 layoffs. It talks about common-sense measures to save dollars. It talks about a balanced operating budget. As my colleague the Associate Minister of Health pointed out, all these references were made in the Ontario budget of 1994, submitted by Floyd Laighren.

Even though the opposition may have some concerns—and I know the Liberals sometimes wonder as to where they should stand, but at least with the NDP, they did believe back in 1994, and we have to give them credit, that tax cuts had benefits, that making it more cost-effective for business to hire people in this province made sense. I'm glad to see that the NDP realized that back in 1994, long before the Common Sense Revolution was implemented.

The Deputy Speaker: Members have up to two minutes for questions and comments.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I do agree with the previous speaker that this government did some things right. Thank goodness, with human nature, none of us can do everything wrong all the time. For the people of Ontario, some good things happened and slipped through.

I need to clarify some of the points that have been brought out. The budget allows for municipalities to lower the farm tax rate, lower than the current 25%. Don't take any credit for that—that's downloading on the municipalities. If the municipalities do that tax cut, which the farmers need, you give no compensation to them. We have municipalities already overburdened with the downloading. This either causes municipalities to have reduced services or to increase taxes on the others. It's no credit to you.

A shortage of apprenticeships: you betcha there's a shortage of apprenticeships. How did this government react? Several months ago it started implementing a charge of \$400 per course against our apprentices. Even those who were partway through the program and entered it on the belief that these were the conditions—it means for an apprentice, who often has to be away from home to take the apprenticeship course, has extra expenses, is living on unemployment insurance at that time, away from their family, and indeed may have expended a lot of money to buy tools for their particular trade, now they're hit with a \$400-per-course charge that wasn't there before. That isn't very helpful to it.

Your corporate tax cuts that you're concerned about delaying, when they come into place, if they come into place, cause our rate to be 25% lower than our competing jurisdictions such as Michigan and New York. There's no need to undersell Ontario by 25%. Corporate tax cuts, by the way, help companies that make a lot of money. The companies that are struggling, the companies that are trying to maintain their employee base, that are trying to stay in business, that aren't paying taxes but are trying to survive, get no help whatsoever out of this.

Mr Prue: I listened with some pleasure, actually, when the member opposite spoke. He talked about some of the sadness of the budget to him, but I have to tell you

that it was not equally shared on this side. You were speaking about the deferral of tax cuts and the deferral monies to private schools. With the greatest of respect, I have to tell the Conservatives and the members opposite that that was one of the highlights of the budget for me because this was at last some common sense coming into the realities of this province: the reality of this province where schools are having to lay off janitors; the reality of this province where there aren't enough secretaries; the reality of this province where in Toronto all the swimming pools are closed and kids who live in poor neighbourhoods won't have a chance to learn to swim anymore; the reality of this province where all the social things we have held all of our lives to be good have been taken away; and I thank, even if it's late, the reality you have finally come to that the tax cuts have gone far enough when balanced with the needs of the people.

So I for one applaud you for not doing it. I applaud you. Don't listen too much to some of those who try to have it both ways and castigate you for doing it and then castigate you for not doing it. Please don't listen to the National Post, because I think they've got it wrong.

On the issue of cigarette taxes, if you have to do something, I believe that's not necessarily the worst thing you could possibly do.

But I do in my remaining time have to tell you that I did take a little umbrage to the thing about—and you were right; the federal government has done really bad things financially to this province. There's no doubt that they have downloaded upon this province. At the same time, it's very hard for me to stand here and listen, because I know that this government, equally true, has downloaded on schools, has downloaded on municipalities, has downloaded on non-government agencies right across the entire province, and you cannot say they're doing that to you without saying you're doing it to someone else.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): I'd like to compliment the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for his elucidation of how the budget, the taxation policies of this government, has assisted his particular area. I think there are two things that need to—it would be interesting to hear from the members opposite, but I'm sure they don't want to bring these items up.

One: back in 1995, the federal government, upon almost losing the country in the referendum with Quebec, promised they would decentralize and devolve person-power training. So to this point in time, we have the situation—I believe Canada, that Ontario is still a valuable member of Confederation. They seem to take all our tax dollars—corporate, personal and whatever else you have. But where is the agreement from Ottawa regarding person-power training? Will we be hearing from members opposite on that issue? It's now probably \$800 million that is owing to this province for that particular issue. But I'm sure we'll continue to hear silence over there.

The second issue I want to raise is the whole issue of home care support, long-term care. The federal Government

have been promising since 1993 to get involved in this issue. Here we are in 2002 and what have we? Still a 3.5-cent dollar on long-term care. When are Romanow and the Grits in Ottawa going to get it together and assist in a national home support program, which they have always promised? If that's an area they want to get involved in in upping their dollars, either through direct delivery or expenditures, this is the place we need it as our demographics change in this province. I'm expecting some remarks from the members opposite on it.

Mr Bartolucci: I'm pleased to be able to offer a few comments on the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. He spoke about training. We think it's very important that dollars be given to train. For so many years, this government has actually punished people who have wanted to train.

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The member from Etobicoke North talks about this program but he should know, or he should tell the people of Ontario, that we're the only province that hasn't signed an agreement with the feds. I would suggest to you that as the other provinces signed a good agreement, his government should sign on with the feds.

I do want to talk about how our budget dollar is spent, because the member talked about the hard-working people of Ontario. The reality is that this is a dollar, and of this dollar, 14 cents is spent paying down the public debt. That's a public debt this government helped create, to the tune of \$21 billion. I wouldn't suggest that's good management of money, when you consider that they spend more money paying down the debt they created than they do on economic development, the environment, resources and justice, along with social services.

I would suggest the people of Ontario aren't very complimentary about the way this government handles this dollar and every other dollar that hard-working Ontarians are trying to get in order to support their families. They're telling you to start managing more effectively.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr Beaubien: I'd like to thank the members from Prince Edward-Hastings, Beaches-East York, Etobicoke North and Sudbury for their comments.

I feel that this is a sensible and prudent budget. It's going to help keep Ontario strong and prosperous. I'm glad to see other people also feel that some of the initiatives we have implemented in the past seven years have been good for the economy, for job creation and for taking people off welfare.

Let me quote from page 3 of this document:

"The economy has been growing, but employment has been lagging. Small and medium-sized businesses, which are the biggest generator of jobs in the economy, have told us that payroll taxes can stand in the way of new hiring."

"To address this concern, this budget cuts payroll taxes to provide a permanent incentive to companies to take on new workers"—document: Ontario budget, 1994.

So you can speak against tax cuts, you can laugh at job creation and you may sneer at taking people off welfare,

but the reality is that the programs the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves governments have put in place in the past seven years are working. Is it the be-all, end-all for everybody in society? Of course it isn't, because I don't think there is such a program. However, a large majority of people in Ontario is better off today when it comes to health care, education and certainly their financial situation.

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is now open for further debate.

Mr Parsons: I will be sharing my time with the members for Sarnia-Lambton and St Catharines.

I think a pretty good way to judge whether the budget is a good one or not is to ask our constituents. I think about the issues they bring to me, and that I know they bring to every member in this House, and I say, "Does the budget address them?"

Certainly, the issue of no family doctors is extremely high on the list, if not at the top. What does this budget do to help find more doctors or train more doctors? Nothing. Yet, in rural Ontario and I suspect in urban Ontario, but certainly in rural Ontario—I have families in my riding travelling 50, 60 and 100 kilometres now to find a family doctor. Imagine doing that with a sick child; just imagine that. Or they're forced to take that sick child and sit in a waiting room in an emergency ward for hours and hours. Clearly, the number one priority among families that need a doctor has not been addressed.

Education: education sounded great, because all of us get calls from constituents on that; \$400 million more for education. Then we look at the numbers and realize that \$350 million of it has already been announced before. It's a traditional amount, evidently, that is announced every once in a while. In fact, there's \$45 million in new money for all of Ontario. The government is reduced to playing a shell game with the students: "Here's the money, now it's gone. Try to guess where it is. Try to guess how many times it will be re-announced."

What's the effect of not funding public education? I pointed out this afternoon that there's only one state in the US that spends less money on its students than Ontario does. The effect of it in our schools has been that principals are no longer deemed necessary in every school. I couldn't have imagined that before 1995. Secretaries are not in every school. Custodians are not there. The safety factor alone should be causing concern; it's not. Music programs are gone.

Special ed: parents, I know, contact each of us almost in tears or in tears over the lack of special-ed funding. We have programs in place for children who are autistic. Wonderful. Once they turn six, evidently they're not autistic any more. I'm being really sarcastic because I think that's cruel to set the students and young people up with a program, have them start to make progress and then dump them when they turn six.

School closures: in rural Ontario, the school is the centre of the community; it is the focus. At one time, school boards had discretion, because they had the ability to think and to make the decisions about moving some

money around to preserve that community school. That can't happen now. Schools are being closed simply because of a funding formula that's inadequate. If the government does come up with a better number—and I know they have to if they look at the facts—it will be too late for far too many rural schools.

Home care: the government has announced 20,000 more long-term home care beds. Wonderful. I liked that announcement in 1999, I liked it in 2000, I liked it in 2001 and here it comes in 2002. Please start to construct some of them rather than making an annual announcement. Your funding of long-term-care beds—and I wrote this down because it's unbelievable to me—the increase you've announced in this budget provides an additional \$2 per day per resident; two bucks a day. You allow for a bath once a week in your wonderful formula. For each meal, each resident is allowed three minutes of help, and they're allowed four minutes in the morning for assistance in getting out of bed, getting dressed, washing and going to the meal; four minutes. How can we treat our seniors like that? It is unimaginable to me.

Money for transit in this budget: zero. For ambulances, it was zero. For Ontarians with disabilities, it was once again zero, year after year. You have the nerve to make a person on ODSP live on between \$8,500 and \$11,160 per year. Don't tell me that's the highest or second highest in Canada. That is below the poverty level, and we're expecting people to live on it.

The cabinet offices: now, that has not been a problem. We've seen a 118% increase—

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): It's 119%.

Mr Parsons: —119%. It's going up every day; a 119% increase in cabinet offices. What an absolute disgrace.

Colleges: there's \$5 million more for colleges to deal with the double cohort. Now, members, students who go to colleges are not second-rate citizens; they are as entitled to an education and will contribute as effectively. Universities and colleges aren't one better than the other, they are different streams with different programs. To give universities \$70 million—which they say is not enough—and then throw out \$5 million for community colleges is an insult.

What this budget really says is that the priorities among the general public don't merit responding to. I think it's disgraceful that they want to be proud of this budget.

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Ms Di Cocco: I am pleased to rise to speak to the budget. I think the budget certainly sets a tone as to where the priorities of government are. I also need to address the fact that the budget, again, deals with where money is being spent but sometimes not necessarily where the money is not going to be spent. There's some confusion here.

Anyway, one of the things that I think is important to note is that we all have a budget in our own homes that we have to take care of every year. We know we should

not spend beyond our means, and I think that's a very practical way to look at how we handle our finances.

One of the problems I look at all the time when it comes to the way government spends its money—constantly hear the rhetoric from the members opposite: "We're putting this much more money into here and that much more money into there." One of the things we see is lack is evaluating how that money is going to be spent. Where is the money going? What are the outcomes? We don't hear that.

We hear things like, "You have to balance your budget at all costs." But at the same time, they don't seem to have any real sense of where the money is actually being spent. One of the things that has happened is that there's more and more money being outsourced to private companies. When you do that, it's away from the purview of the Provincial Auditor. Once that happens, we can't find out if we're getting value for money. Hydro is a perfect example. You blanket it with this cloak of secrecy, and what happens? No one knows what is really happening in that sector.

To me, the whole issue of management of where the money is going is tremendously important. It isn't about putting money back into a system or taking it out; it's about how that money is being spent. Is it delivering the service? For instance, in health care one thing that is very important to me is having this whole essence of accountability. I brought in a bill a year ago and it went through committee. It was called the Ethics and Transparency in Public Matters Act, and it asked that bodies such as hospital boards, school boards, municipalities and also the electricity sector conduct their affairs in public. They chose to go in camera to make decisions, there would be a penalty imposed on the people who actually went in camera who shouldn't have gone in camera to make decisions.

To me, that is tremendously important, because it's about the right of the public to know. That transparency provides for good decision-making. It provides a real accounting of where money is being spent and how it's being spent and what the decisions are.

When I look at this budget, I'm certainly pleased to hear that the government has decided at the very least not to defer the tax cuts, because they have admitted something. They've admitted the tax cuts are not the panacea of all our ills in this province. As a matter of fact, the way we are going down this road of tax cuts—and that's a road we've heard for the last seven years—really does erode the ability to provide services to the public.

Maybe it does bring taxes 25% below the United States, but what good is that if we can't access health care because we've got backups at the emergency, when we have all types of ambulances being diverted because there's no room at the inn? I have had health professionals come to see me from my riding of Sarnia-Lambton, and they've been talking to me about the issues of our own emergency in Sarnia-Lambton. They were telling me that in April and May they saw 12,500 people. The nurses and the professionals are saying, "We can't

handle this load with the staff we have. We just can't do it." Not only that; they don't even have enough stretchers to put the patients on.

Then what happens is that we have nowhere to divert the ambulances. A number of times the emergency doctors have had to say, "We only want the code 4"—which apparently is the highest risk—"patient. Don't bring us anyone else here." This is what they've been telling me. I don't think they are lying. That is the reality they are facing on the front lines. Why? Why are they facing that reality? We supposedly have one of the greatest economic booms we've had in the seven years that this government has been in power, yet the system, if you look at it at the front lines, has been eroding. The question is, why? Why is there that sense that we don't have enough nurses? Why is it that we don't have enough doctors?

We say it's a global matter, but it's more than a global matter; it has been compounded in Ontario. In Ontario we have the lowest per capita nurses in the country. That doesn't just happen; it happens because there has been policy in place that has discouraged the health professionals in this area.

We talk about management, and one of the issues about—

Interjection: Or lack of it.

Ms Di Cocco: Well, I'm going to use the word "incompetence," because I believe the government has been incompetent in how it has restructured hospitals, and I'll tell you why. In my view, when they restructured the hospitals, they forgot to put something into the equation, and I heard this from Dr Sinclair. They decided, "You know what? We're going to cut some beds. We're going to save some money," but do you know what they forgot to put into the equation? They forgot that we were having an increased number of people in this province and we had an aging population. So do you know what they forgot to put into the mix? They forgot to put those numbers into the mix. So what do we have today? We have a shortage of beds in the hospital. We have occupancy rates at 99% in hospitals. Do you know what that means? That means there is absolutely no flexibility for any new patients to come in.

When we talk about what I call mismanagement, the government members forget—it's amazing. They don't talk about the \$20 billion that they added to the debt. They talk about their budget. They've balanced their budget here—we understand that—but they forgot that they added this huge amount to their Visa; they added this huge amount to the debt, \$20 billion added to the debt since 1995. What I find amazing when I see that, when I hear that, is that on a number of occasions I've actually heard the members on the government side deny that. Either they don't understand that there is a debt that they have added on to and that there is a budget that they have balanced—they don't seem to understand that there is a difference. Our credit rating in this province is still at AA. It used to be AAA+. It's now AA, is my understanding.

Mr Dunlop: It's AAA now, Caroline.

Ms Di Cocco: AA is all I've seen.

I looked at the budget and I tried to understand where the money was going. Again, one of my biggest surprises is that just like every other government, they know how to take care of themselves. A couple of years ago, when I first came to the Legislature, I was watching all the different cuts in the different ministries and I was curious, so I decided to find out how much they had cut their cabinet costs, the Cabinet Office. I actually believed they had cut them. So I went and took a look and I compared it to 1995, and I actually saw this incredible increase. Remember, we've got a smaller Legislature. Our Legislature is now 103 members; it used to be 130. Do you remember, when they cut down the number of members, what the idea was? The idea was that it was going to save money. Is that not right? Isn't that one of the reasons they touted that they were going to make the Legislature smaller? Instead, what has happened? Cabinet Office costs have gone up by 119.5%, to be exact, since 1995. That is unacceptable in any type of corporation or management, but as far as this government is concerned, I think they had hoped that nobody would take a look at that and notice. But we did notice, and it isn't, in my view, an acceptable way to manage.

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Education is another issue. What really drives our competitive edge globally? What really drives it is our brain trust. What really drives our ability to generate new jobs is innovation. Where does that come from? It comes from our brain trust. That's what we compete with. We compete with our ability, our highly skilled workforce. Where have we failed in the last seven years, in my opinion? In our education system, at all levels. What do we have? We now have overcrowded schools, large classrooms, a lack of textbooks. But do you know what is incredible? They've changed the curriculum, brought in a new curriculum, and therefore needed new textbooks, and what did they forget to do? They forgot to give—well, they didn't forget; they obviously chose not to give adequate dollars to pay for the new textbooks for the new curriculum they had asked the school boards to implement. What kind of management is that? I believe the word "incompetence" can be used in that case.

So many of our students are falling through the cracks now. We have over 30,000 students who need to be assessed yet for learning disabilities. Instead of attempting to get each and every person in this province to be the best they can be, because that's the measure of a good society, we say, "No, there's no money. Just shut down the schools." We're shutting down good schools with 300 students. They are 90% full; we're shutting them down. They're in good physical shape; we're shutting them down. Why? Because in places like Sarnia-Lambton, a school that has 300 students and is 90%-plus full is not viable according to this funding formula. We have no room any more for smaller schools, even though students do better in smaller schools.

I believe the direction of this government is based on a very narrow ideology which included cutting taxes,

lowering government spending—except, supposedly, cabinet offices—shrinking the size of government, except cabinet offices, and reducing regulations.

Remember those things that used to protect the environment? “Well, we have to remove those barriers.” Thus the Red Tape Commission, to address how to speed up and to take obstacles away that impede what they call economic growth. Therefore, the public interest and public safety can be jeopardized, because we have to speed those things up.

I will finish my discussion. Thank you for your attention.

The Deputy Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions and comments.

Mr Prue: I listened to the last two speakers and I must say that some of what they said struck home.

They talked about the lack of staff in hospitals. Really, that is becoming a recurring problem not just in places like Sarnia and Prince Edward county, but even in huge places like Toronto. The Toronto Star—and I know it is a paper much admired by the members opposite—did a whole series of work around Toronto East General Hospital, a hospital that has had its own controversy in recent months, of what it was like to be in that hospital to see people being born, to see people dying, to see the workers working, to see the lack of workers that were there. I have to tell you, that report should have opened a lot of eyes. What it said, in a nutshell, was that there simply weren’t enough staff there to deal with the hundreds and thousands of people who go into that hospital looking for care each and every day, usually in emergency situations.

Also, just this past week while I was in the constituency office for a few hours, a gentleman came in to see me. He asked that his name not be used, but he talked about his experience at Toronto East General Hospital. He asked me, if I had a chance some day to say something about it, to do so. His problem was he went in one night at 10 o’clock very ill, sick to his stomach. He said the staff was wonderful. The nurse was there and came to see him every hour or two until 6 o’clock in the morning, when the resident doctor finally got to him. When he asked why, the doctor told him there simply weren’t enough staff in that hospital any more to do the work that needed to be done for him, or for anyone else, and that he should go to see his MPP. Well, he came to see me and I promised him that I would tell the members opposite of the difficulties, even in the city of Toronto, due to shortages. We are glad to see you’re putting more money into hospitals. It’s long overdue. That would be my comment.

Mr Dunlop: It’s a pleasure to rise tonight to speak on Bill 109, the budget bill.

I’d like to make some comments based on the comments of the member for Sarnia-Lambton. She talked about health care costs and spent a lot of time on health care. It’s interesting that you reflected back on some debt that our government actually accumulated since the Common Sense Revolution. The fact of the matter is, that

was very well laid out, a clear message with a clear platform in the Common Sense Revolution. No government could possibly eliminate a \$12-billion debt, that party had accumulated over there, and eliminate it in one year. We laid out a platform and the people of Ontario accepted that.

If you go back to the second platform, the Blueprint commitments, we outlined that we would spend \$23 billion in health care by the year 2004 and right now we’re \$2.2 billion ahead of that, as we’re spending \$23 billion this year. I might say, and I think everyone in this room agrees—I’m sure even my colleagues opposite would agree—that’s without the help of the federal government. We all know they dropped their percentage 14% on last year’s amount of money, and if they don’t put any more money in this year it’ll probably be back down at about 11.5% or 12% on the dollars. They don’t really want to hear that. You understand why, because it goes back to the rhetoric.

I’d like to make another comment on Mr Manley, our new Minister of Finance, who tried to capitalize. After years of being embarrassed into making tax cuts, last week he said, “Yes, we’re going to carry on and have those tax cuts”—the first time ever, because he was humiliated by this government into finally making tax cuts. I appreciate the comments.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I should have shared this two minutes with my colleague from Ancaster, but I know he understands.

I was wondering if the member—I know she didn’t have as much time as she would like. Under the new rules you don’t. The people who have disabilities in this province—I heard my friend Ernie Parsons talk about this in the early part of his speech as well. I was really moved by his concern for people on disability who have not had an increase in about 10 years. I talked to some of those people, and what has happened is that their utility costs have gone up. The cost of natural gas, the cost of electric power and water in communities, some basic costs, have gone up pretty substantially over the years, yet the allocation to those individuals who are on a disability pension has stayed the same. Unless their circumstances have changed in some way individually, there has been no overall increase in the allocation for people on disability. I find that most unfortunate. I’m glad Mr Parsons mentioned that in his speech, because he has been campaigning for that and for other benefits for people who are on disability.

The second category of person I feel sorry for, and hope my friend from Lambton made some mention of this, is people who need home care for individuals they’re looking after. I think particularly of elderly parents who are looking after developmentally disabled individuals within their family or others who may have multiple disabilities, some of them developmental and some of them related to physical disabilities. These people are absolutely beside themselves and are really, really concerned that, as they get older, there will be no one left to look after those individuals in their family.

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Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I couldn't help but respond to the member from Sarnia-Lambton. I think she's been listening far too long to the member from Scarborough-Agincourt. I have the greatest—the member is their finance critic, but he does always try to confuse you, the public. I'm looking at this year's budget—and to the people of Ontario, if you want one, you can call my constituency office in Durham and we can certainly get one to you. We've done the right thing.

If I look at the growth of debt—and I think everyone knows the debt doubled under the Liberals and NDP; that's common knowledge. The point is that when we took office—these are public records—\$101 billion, almost \$102 billion, and now it's \$110 billion. To put this in perspective, Mr Speaker, and you would understand, when we were elected in 1995, each year there was \$11 billion worth of debt accumulating as the deficit. We took three years to sort of balance the budget. So each year is \$10 billion, and that's \$20 billion. Not only that; we have paid down against the debt compared to where it was.

The member from Sarnia-Lambton should get a copy of Hansard. Where she's getting confused—she's leaving. It's the accumulated stranded debt from Ontario Hydro. If you put those two numbers—we call it the electricity restructuring debt. But that's part of the \$38 billion called stranded debt. They keep lumping that in. They don't want to admit it, but I think the record shows clearly that this government has committed to paying \$5 billion down toward the accumulated debt, and I believe that Ernie Eves and our Finance Minister, Janet Ecker, have done a spectacular job in terms of balancing demands in health care, demands in education, demands in the environment and clean water etc. They've done the right thing. The member from Lambton is listening too much to the member from Scarborough-Agincourt and she's got it all wrong. So just rewind your cassette—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Either of the original two speakers has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr Parsons: I'd like to thank the members for Sarnia-Lambton, Beaches-East York, Simcoe North, St Catharines and Durham for contributing to this debate. I would like to refer to the things said by the member for Simcoe North, who mentioned how much more money they're spending on health care. The object is not to increase the money going into health care; the object is to spend the money wisely. If we have additional funds, then we can do more things. We're seeing initiatives on the part of this government that have some of the health care money go to profit lines for private clinics. That doesn't help a patient; that simply profits someone, probably a friend of the party. But it is not health care money well spent.

This government some months ago approved funding for macular degeneration. I truly thank you for doing that. That was a great initiative—

Mr Bradley: Thanks to you raising it.

Mr Parsons: Well, I appreciate that, but it has made a difference to many people.

I have become increasingly aware, though, of the effect of juvenile diabetes on our citizens. Juvenile diabetes is the leading cause of amputation, of heart problems, of kidney failure. The government spends \$100,000 if there are complications for a citizen with juvenile diabetes. That is not money well spent. All too often, they come out of the hospital having to have a limb or something removed. There is a very simple device now available called an insulin pump, which maintains the regular feeding of insulin into the body. It's not covered. It's \$5,700, but the treatment for not having it is \$100,000. I would ask that the government seriously consider doing not only what is morally right for the people in this province, but what is fiscally responsible. Certainly this is a leading candidate to be covered under the assistive devices program. It makes life better, allows people to be contributing citizens and it reduces substantial health care costs to this government. Please do it.

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for further debate.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): It is indeed my pleasure tonight to say a few words in favour of Bill 109, Keeping the Promise for Growth and Prosperity Act. I do like the name of the act. "Keeping the Promise" is one more indication that our government has that type of conduct as a cornerstone and we will continue to do it, something that other governments have not done for many, many years, or indeed never; and again, the "prosperity" part of that act—things are good in Ontario, there is absolutely no doubt. The economy is booming; the jobs are booming.

You know, it's interesting. I listened to my colleagues from across the room, the members for St Catharines, Trinity-Spadina and Prince Edward-Hastings, and these are all the groups that say that nobody other than a few on Bay Street like the tax cuts. Yet I remember back in 1995 or 1996, we opened a special account and said to anybody in Ontario who did not want those tax cuts to please return them to us and put them in that account.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): Surely all the Liberals did that.

Mr Stewart: I would hope all the Liberals did. Could we maybe have a show of hands? How many Liberals did that? There are not many of them here. It's called procrastination. You can stand up and criticize about things like that, yet when you have the opportunity to do something about it you absolutely don't do anything at all.

I believe this bill, if implemented, when it is implemented, will enhance the growth and prosperity in this province. This is a good budget. If passed, this bill will ensure that Ontario remains the best place to live, work and raise a family. In other words, it will ensure a prosperous future for our province, and we know that prosperity is a very major part of the existence of this great province.

Prosperity means a growing economy that provides more and better jobs—this we have done; more disposable income—this has happened; and more revenue to

invest in the future, and that is a fact. All you have to do is look at the small businesses that are expanding in this great province and it is because of what has happened. The economic growth has created that prosperity.

Prudence and frugality on their own are a very important part of making sure that governments continue to be prosperous. I remember back a few years ago I wanted to buy a new car. I looked at the dollars and I thought, "No, I don't think I can afford that new car this year. I'm going to defer it till next year." I can remember in business wanting to do a number of things and having to defer them for one year, to be prudent and to be smart and to conduct it in a businesslike fashion. That is no different from what we are doing this year, to balance and to make sure we balance a budget this year—and again, four budgets in a row.

That's why we are going to continue on that course: tight fiscal discipline, balanced budgets and debt reduction. They are all priority areas. We have to do that if we're going to continue to focus on our priorities. Our priorities have not changed one iota since we became government in 1995. Health care was a priority, education was and is a priority; the environment as well is one of those priorities. The focus has been on efficiency, effective delivery of government programs and government services. If we are not prudent, if we are not frugal, if we do not operate in a businesslike fashion, then let me assure you those services will not be enhanced in the future because we will not have the dollars to do it.

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I believe that the Ontario government should be accountable to the people of this province. The taxpayers of this province is whom I am talking about. Let me define the Ontario government's definition of accountability. I know "accountability" is a strange word to some people, but I believe that it has to be one of the cornerstones of any government and it is a cornerstone of ours. Accountability is the way organizations and their workers must answer and take responsibility for their performance to those who pay for and use their services. Those people, ladies and gentlemen, are the people, the taxpayers, of Ontario.

Without accountability, without faith and respect in all government institutions and indeed for the people of the province, the respect will not be there. I believe it is mandatory that it be there in conducting the business we conduct on a day-to-day basis. In fact, we solidly believe that tax dollars belong to the hard-working people of Ontario, not the government. All we are to do is to make sure the services that people want and need are in place.

Taxpayers, citizens and users of government services expect, in fact demand, that the government deliver quality services in the most effective and efficient manner possible—not a very dynamic statement but a very important statement.

The government has improved and will continue to improve its own ability to deliver value-for-money services directly to the people. We will continue those efforts because we can't afford to put our hard-won fiscal

discipline at risk. That is why in the 2002 budget we announced a number of initiatives that would maintain and improve government accountability and the delivery of services to the people of Ontario.

I believe that no other jurisdiction in North America is so actively pursuing value for taxpayers' money. Effective this year, our business planning process incorporates zero-based budget principles—again something that is done in business every day, and most of it is done in the household. But it seems that governments in the past have not thought that way until our government came into power back in 1995.

Every ministry is now required to review all of its program spending over a four-year cycle to determine program effectiveness, efficiency and value for money. Our government is taking the process even further. Premier Eves announced in this budget that he was establishing a parliamentary assistants' committee on program evaluation, chaired by my colleague Julia Munro, the member for York North. Through its government-wide review, this committee will identify resources for reintro-

duction into priority areas.

It's interesting: what business does, if they looking for efficiencies, if they are looking at effective operations, is that they usually form a group of team leaders to take a look at all aspects of the business to try and find where efficiencies can be achieved. Then, of course, when they do find them, they present them to the entire team, to the entire group in that particular business.

One of the keys of it is that the day you make that presentation and tell them where the efficiencies will be achieved, you had better keep the same team going to start relooking the next morning, because that is the only way the business survives and it is the only way, I believe, that government can survive as well in an effective and efficient manner.

As I mentioned, the parliamentary assistants' committee on program evaluation will ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being used most effectively in the programs that Ontarians value the most. As I said, our priorities have been and will be health education and the environment. If I were to do a survey of the people in my riding I would think they would agree wholeheartedly that that's where the dollars should be going.

Providing stability and encouraging continuous improvement in those services on which Ontarians depend is a priority of this government. You can't just put a service into place and let it sit there forever. I've always made it very public in this House, and I will continue to make it public, that I'm a great believer in sunset clauses. What works today may not work next year or the year after or the year after that. It has to be revisited and looked at to make sure it is working as effectively and efficiently as possible.

To this end, I believe that the government will develop more effective ways of preparing and presenting the provincial budget, in constantly looking at new ways to improve, to make sure we continue to operate in an effective and efficient way. We've also got to assist our

public sector partners with more stability and certainty. We will work to develop multi-year budgeting and a multi-year-based funding model, including the introduction of three-year-based funding for hospitals and school boards.

It's interesting: there are some of us in this House who were at the municipal level of politics. I was one of them for about 13 years, and one of the things we were constantly after, the governments of the day, was to make sure we had our funding in advance of preparing our budgets at the municipal level. Certainly hospitals and school boards have been talking about that. Many of us who were involved in municipal politics I think are extremely supportive of this type of initiative. It is very difficult for people to budget if they don't know the amount of money they're going to get. I highly support this, I think it is long overdue, and I'm pleased that it is our government that is going to do it and to look at it, because nobody has done it in the past.

We will look for way to incorporate information on results so that the users, the decision-makers and taxpayers, can hold government accountable for delivering on its goals and objectives. The government has to be accountable; we have to be accountable to our public sector partners, whether it's through community services, through hospitals or through school boards. We want to make sure they know what our objectives and goals are, and hopefully they will be theirs as well. We will aim to table the next provincial budget before the start of the fiscal year so that all public sector organizations can plan and manage more effectively and efficiently. I think it is only fair. We have said we will do it and, again, as we have so many times in the past, we will keep our promises.

We will work toward publishing a multi-year fiscal framework in the Ontario budget, outlining revenue, expenditures and economic projections. As with multi-year-based funding agreements, this framework will be developed in accordance with sound fiscal management and principles, including responsibility and transparency. If there is one thing that I believe our government has endeavoured to do, it is to make sure that what we do on a daily basis is very transparent for the people of Ontario. I think it's a good example of the number of times we've taken proposed bills out on the road for public input, more than any government has in the last many years.

Our government will also move to a more businesslike way of managing and accounting for tangible capital assets. Many of our critics say that we can't run government like a business. I say that is not right. Why can't we? In all of the times that people have come up to me and said, "Government isn't like a business; it shouldn't be run like a business," I usually say, "Why not?" And I have not yet heard why we can't. All of the principles that business has, whether it be efficiency, accountability, effectiveness—we do it in business; why wouldn't we do it in government? I can't understand that. I believe the critics who say that we can't have not looked very hard at it. I hope some day somebody tells me why it cannot be done.

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Beginning this year, of course, the government will depreciate assets in the same way that a business does. This will enable the government to determine the true cost of delivering government services and improve resource allocation. True cost—surprise, surprise. Let me tell you, if you want to stay in business, you better know what your true costs are, because if you don't, you won't survive. A million businesses have fallen because they don't know what their costs are and cannot move forward accordingly.

A good example of this is Ontario Hydro. They didn't know what their costs were—totally out of control, spending way more money than they ever had. That's what I'm saying. The government has to know what their true costs are, and if you don't, you've got a problem.

Mr Speaker, I think you will agree that these initiatives are the hallmark of a government with a profound respect for transparency and taxpayer dollars. I've said this before and I will say it again: tax dollars belong to the hard-working people of Ontario, not the government. It's up to us to ensure that those tax dollars are being spent accountably and responsibly. We owe this to the people of Peterborough—absolutely, we do; one of the finer ridings in this great province—as well as the people of Ontario.

Our government policies are creating a very positive business climate that contributes to the diversity and resilience of the province's economy. Since 1995 we have focused on eliminating barriers to growth, lower taxes, strategic investments in education, innovation in infrastructure, streamlining financial regulations and less red tape. The economy is good in Ontario. Things indeed are good.

Within this supportive economic environment, businesses of all sizes across a wide range of industries have contributed to strong job growth in Ontario since 1995. Small and medium-sized enterprises have responded strongly to the improved tax, regulatory and general business climate, and since 1996 well over 800,000 jobs have been created in this great province. Things are good in Ontario.

I would also suggest, in addition, that retail and wholesale trade, leisure services and construction are contributing significantly to job growth, aided by strong domestic spending. Things are good in Ontario.

Last Friday, in my riding of Peterborough, we just announced a new call centre—500 new jobs in our community, in my riding. Things are good in Ontario.

General Motors is expanding: a third shift of production at its Ottawa car assembly plant. Bowater has announced plans to construct a new softwood sawmill in Thunder Bay. De Beers has continued to invest in the Victor diamond project in James Bay. And many other companies, including from off-shore, are looking at increasing investment in this great province.

As I said before, things are good in Ontario. And they are good because of our government under Premier Mike Harris and Premier Ernie Eves, a government that

believes in accountability, that believes in efficiency, that believes in effective, good government. We will continue to do this and we should be supporting Bill 109.

The Deputy Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions and comments.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): Listening to the member for Peterborough talking about the role and function of government being to deliver services that people want and need, and then going on talking about his confidence in his government's private sector ability to run the government, begs some obvious questions that we've been asking on this side of the House related to hydro and the need not to privatize, particularly Hydro One, and also the whole issue of health care delivery, which I want to focus on specifically.

I don't think it's enough just to spend your life leaning on your horn. I know we had the member from Prince Edward-Hastings speak. When he speaks, I know the importance of being earnest, listening to him chat. He talked a bit about the doctor shortage. I want to just describe what happens in Australia, where they don't have a doctor shortage. They recruit in the junior grades, I think grades 6 and 7. They do aptitude tests to spot who has an interest. They mentor young people through high school. It involves a whole lot of volunteer work. Then they fund these young people through medical school and then, having been recruited from underserviced areas, the arrangement is that they're placed back in those communities. They don't have a doctor shortage there.

The other issue that I would just draw quickly around the medical side is that we know from statistical analysis that the OMA has done some 40% of graduating doctors go south after graduation because the debt load is so high, and 50% of that 40% don't return. So if this government wants to do something creative about the doctor shortage they can look to Australia and they can look to student debt load as two possible ways to help resolve that problem.

Mr Prue: The member for Peterborough asked for someone to explain to him why government can't run like a business. I will tell him in very brief words, if he will listen. As the mayor of East York, we adopted zero-based budgeting, just like this government did. We did it from 1993 until we were amalgamated in 1997. In that period, when I was the mayor, we had five balanced budgets and we also paid down our entire debt. Our reward, of course, was to be amalgamated, against the wishes of the people who live there. But in that time, we adopted the view that yes, we could run government like a business but you had to balance the business's need to make profit with the government's need to provide service.

What this government has failed to see, and what I believe you have failed to see, is that the service aspect has to be every bit as strong as the profit aspect. It does not have to be that way in private business, and indeed it never is. But in government it is a key component that at least must balance, and where there is any doubt must outweigh, the need to make profit to pay down debts.

Having said that, I hope you now understand why someone has at last explained it to you, because I am still somewhat perplexed by the statement on the priorities of this government being health, education and environment. For health, I think at last you've seen the light and there is some money. But for education, there are thousands of people on the streets and in meetings of citizens everywhere in this province. Literally every week they can see their schools deteriorating. They are not happy with what is happening.

In terms of the environment, one need only speak of Walkerton; one need only speak of all of the people who have been laid off, which resulted in Walkerton; one need only see the mess the entire department got into in all those years. I fail to see how that could possibly have been a priority in the past.

Mr O'Toole: I just don't want to respond to the NDP message here. It's the IWA, the Interim Waste Authority Ruth Grier—she sort of spoiled Ontario.

But the member for Peterborough, a very good friend of mine, talked early in his speech—and it's fundamental to understanding the theme that he was pursuing. I think I'm quoting. I hope I'm not doing a disservice to that because he's so profound that often I miss the point. He talked about the decision of buying a car or, for instance, buying a condo and wondering if it's the right thing to do. Always spending within your means was the point that he was trying to make. His wife, Judy, is watching perhaps, and I know the anguish he's going through on various personal decisions, but it's all about accountability. In fact, unusually, it's kind of poetic harmony in a way, because I just looked back in the budget in 1996 and here's what I read: "The people of Ontario expect their government to live within its means"—much like the member from Peterborough was suggesting. "We are finding savings in every area of government activity"—as Mr Stewart would see in his own personal budget. "The government is making the same difficult decisions and adjustments that we have all had to make at home and at work in our everyday lives." That was by the then-Finance Minister Ernie Eves.

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So if I reflect on what Mr Stewart was trying to say to us, government during this budget, in the 2002-03 budget, is saying to the people of Ontario, "Our heart is with the priorities of the people of Ontario." That priority is clearly in the budget for health care, a record level of over \$25 billion; education, almost half a billion dollars; environment and clean water.

On the other hand, there are those supporters of ours who said, "Where are the tax cuts?" The Premier is still on message. He realized the economy is soft. He's on the same page as Mr Stewart from Peterborough. He recognized that it's time for difficult decisions, whether it's a condo, a house or the people of Ontario. We choose the people of Ontario, and I'm happy to support this budget.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I'm happy to have a couple of minutes to respond to the member from Peterborough

and the sermon he gave us about fiscal responsibility and that this would suggest that this budget in fact represents that. I think it's important to remind the people of Ontario of the record of this government. If you think it's good business, I'd like to know what business over the course of this period of good economic growth has actually increased the debt of the province by well over 0%, pushing 25%. The debt that the province has is greater now than when they came to office in 1995. That's something that our children are going to have to pay off. So they crow on the other side of the House about being fiscally responsible and good business managers, and yet they have borrowed the money to do that. They're very silent on that fact. They're very silent on the amount of money that this budget is going to put toward that debt that our children will finish paying for. So when I hear about good business practices, I've hardly seen that in this government.

Also, when I think of businesses in my riding, in my community, of a car business, for example, they say that the salesperson sells you the car but it's the service you get that keeps you coming back. I would suggest to this government that the service that they provided to the people of Ontario may not have them return to them in the future, because people who need to access health care services, education services, when they consider what has happened to our environment since these folks came to office, will indicate they're not very satisfied with the service the government has given.

So just to the member from Peterborough, who would suggest that they are the example of good business practice, I would suggest that is not the case.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Peterborough has up to two minutes to respond to those comments.

Mr Stewart: It was interesting to listen to some of the comments, and I often think a lot of us who talk about responsibility and accountability and whether we can live within budgets or not should sometimes look in the mirror before we start criticizing others.

Anyway, I had talked a bit of a theme about things good in Ontario. And things are good in Ontario if you look at 800,000-plus jobs, 600,000-plus off social services. It's interesting to hear about how you can't run a government like business. The gentleman from Beaches—

Interjection: East York.

Mr Stewart: East York; sorry. About this word "profits," profits help you to expand your business, to put in services etc. What in the name of goodness do you think revenues are? What do they do? They allow you to give services like health care, like education, like the environment. You've got to have some dollars if you're going to provide services. It's the same thing with profit. Heavenly days, go back to school and listen about some of this. It's not a dirty word. If you don't have revenues on the plus side, you can't supply the services. But you have to know your costs first. I know you guys over there don't think that way, but you've got to. It's called common sense; this is how you supply services. I can't

buy a car unless I have money. I can't buy food for the table unless I have money. That's no different from what government is. But you had better know what your costs are to supply those services. That's why we're going to zero-based budgeting. I support the government for that and I support them on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for further debate.

Mr Bradley: So much to say and so little time to say it in, is the lament I have as I share my time this evening with Mr McMeekin, the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

First of all, I want to reflect upon what are some of the major calls coming into the constituency office. Next to the situations involving the Family Responsibility Office, which of course occupies half the time of the constituency staff, there are other areas that are extremely important. One is the doctor shortage that exists in St Catharines, particularly now general practitioners. It seems that almost monthly people are retiring, or perhaps they become ill or perhaps they're moving out of town or moving out of the country, and it's leaving us with very few physicians in the Niagara region.

We need programs. We need, first of all, more people being graduated out of our medical schools in Ontario. We need more incentives for places such as St Catharines and the Niagara region to attract family physicians and specialists to the area. I certainly make that plea. I put that on the table as an important issue. I know we're not the only area in the province that is finding that to be a problem, but it is one that we as legislators, and in this case the government of the day, should be addressing very aggressively.

A second issue that has come to my attention is people who have children with autism. A question was asked in the House today about that, and much has been said about children with autism and a very special treatment, an aggressive treatment that is available and now given to children, I believe, between the ages of two and five. But after that they are ineligible for the funding which could provide that treatment, so if they are to receive that treatment they have to pay out of their own pockets. That's very expensive. That gets into two-tier medical care. I make a plea to the government to provide the necessary funding so we can have more spaces and not people competing for the existing spaces and trying anything and everything they can to have their child put ahead of another child, when we would like to see, of course, all children access those services.

With the Minister of Natural Resources here, I want to say that there's another issue, what's referred to as Marcy's Wood in the riding of Erie-Lincoln. It is an area where there's a Carolinian forest, a wonderful natural area that is under threat of development. I think there's a developer who wants to make a bid for it. I would like to see some kind of moratorium put on any sale of that, if that's possible, and ensure that stays in public hands. I know some commitment has been made already on the part of the government and I would like to ensure that

rather pristine land is kept as it should be. I refer the minister to a letter to you in this regard from Mr Bert Mills, who has provided me with a copy. So I ask the minister if there's some emergency action that can be taken by him to ensure that it doesn't fall into private hands and a property that should not be developed then gets developed. I know that with his special responsibility as Minister of Natural Resources he'll want to look into that.

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I'm going to talk about something else out there that strays a bit from the budget. Nevertheless, you'd be interested in this. I am amazed, amused and appalled by this uproar now, at this stage, over Izzy Asper and the Ottawa Citizen. There's Conrad Black, who bought all those newspapers, turned them from moderate, middle-of-the-road newspapers—he said it was left pap, or something like that—and now when Izzy takes them over and says, "No, they're not all going to be right-wing, Alliance, Mike Harris"—it's not Mike Harris any more; well, I can't even say Ernie Eves, but Conservatives the way they used to be when Mike Harris was around. All these papers—the Windsor Star, the Ottawa Citizen and several others, some of them out west—are vitriolicly anti-Liberal and anti-NDP. Today there's a hue and cry out there about Mr Asper interfering. While people may not agree with the specifics of how somebody intervenes, I simply ask the question of the CBC, which has ongoing coverage of this: where were they when Conrad Black made them all into right-wing papers?

Mr Speaker, you're neutral in the chair but you're a member of the New Democratic Party. When was the last time you got a break out of the Ottawa Citizen?

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: You wouldn't be able to think of that, because you've never had a break as a political party.

So finally Mr Asper says, "You know, I'd like to see some balance in the newspapers I own" that are vitriolicly right-wing. I know I divert from the issue at hand, but I just thought I'd mention that to people. I looked at the crowd demonstrating outside of the Ottawa Citizen. They're a bunch of Alliance types. I've seen them in other parts of the province, with the red faces and shaking their fists, anti-immigrant, anti-French and so on, shaking their fists at people. Now they don't like it because, of course, the owner of the Ottawa Citizen says, "I'd like something different from the usual anti-Liberal, anti-NDP editorials etc that we get in the Ottawa Citizen."

I know you wanted me to bring some balance to that particular debate, but it takes away from some of my other time here, and I do want to say that our CCAC, community care access centre, needs more funding to be able to carry out its responsibilities. People today simply are not able to get the kinds of services they would like to get, and that's because this government will not provide sufficient funding for that purpose. Of course, they've bounced all the people off the board and they've put in—some people would say puppets; I don't want to say that

because it's kind of a pejorative word—people whose thinking is very similar to the government's, let's put that way. I see some people in the Niagara region who are even fundraisers for other members who happen to be on the CCAC board now. I'm sure that's just coincidental.

I want to say as well that I'm concerned about Visudyne. After repeated questions in the House, particularly that dramatic day when Dalton McGuinty, the leader of the official opposition, addressed this issue to the Minister of Health with someone in the gallery who was suffering from macular degeneration, finally the government capitulated to the pressure and is now going to fund people for that particular treatment. It costs about \$2,500 a treatment. But we're finding some problems as to how it is going to be funded, number one. Number two, I think the government should fund it back to when Health Canada approved it. I understand their not wanting to go before that, because it would be considered perhaps an experimental treatment, but certainly back to that time and I hope the government will capitulate on that particular issue as it has capitulated earlier.

I want to say as well that I'm concerned about school closings in my riding. I understand—I'm not an unreasonable person—that somewhere, sometime, there are schools that close. What is happening, however, is that the provincial funding formula militates in favour of closing schools, sometimes where they shouldn't be closed, because the local board of education gets the money when they sell the school, and that's the only way they're going to get money to repair other schools. So see that as a problem.

I believe, for instance, there should be a problem solving—someone must want to get a note to me saying we have only a few moments left. I see them approaching just when I'm wound up.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Anyway, I will continue to say—and some of the members from auto centres will agree with this—I think it would be great to have a select committee on the automotive industry. The select committee on alternative fuels worked very well. There are some members who are here in the House tonight. You would think they would have divergent views and a divergent philosophy. I can tell you, I was very impressed with all members of that committee, how they checked their partisan hats at the door and got down to a task-oriented situation where they had a committee which was well done. I think a select committee on the automotive industry would be very helpful because we have many challenges to meet. I think most of us here know just how important the automotive industry is to each of our communities.

Lastly, because I'm running out of time, I'm going to talk about the ambulance dispatch service that is totally unsatisfactory for the Niagara region for a number of reasons, which I've enunciated in the petitions that keep coming into my office for me to present on matters of this kind, where the government kept hidden for several months a report which said what should be done about

spatch. Now I want to turn the rest of the time over to my colleague Mr McMeekin.

Mr McMeekin: I'm pleased to follow the member for Catharines, who brings so much wisdom to the debate. It has been said that for those who can learn from the past, the past indeed becomes a prologue to our future.

In that context, I'm pleased to say that in some small way the budget put a couple of days back was yesterday's budget. I say "pleased," because had it been two budgets back some of us might have stood and applauded that effort. It was in fact yesterday's budget. It was reacting to events that have overtaken this government. In terms of painting any vision for tomorrow, it was quite complete in both its analysis and its presentation.

As a relative newcomer to this place, it strikes me that there's frequently a disconnect between Queen's Park and those people we have the privilege of representing. Somebody in the rural area of my riding asked me last week if I knew the difference between Jurassic Park and Queen's Park. When I asked him what it was, he said they made a movie out of Jurassic Park. Anyhow, that side, I think the disconnect is serious.

In my riding of Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Haldimand-Norfolk, we've attempted to get a handle on this by inviting our citizens to be involved in a series of citizen-advisory groups, one on education, one on the environment, one on health care and one of course on agriculture. We have a youth forum where we meet with 20 young people every six weeks. We talk about issues of importance to them. This culminated recently in the late spring in something I don't know has been done anywhere else. We called it a constituent assembly. We took a full day. People volunteered to participate, they set the agenda and we talked about issues of importance to them.

I made it a priority when I was elected to create this constituent assembly because, whether it sounds corny or not, I believe that only a commitment to hearing from the grassroots and then listening to and acting on what they tell you can produce good government. Even more fundamentally, I think it's a vital part of my role as a member of the Legislature to help members of my constituency talk to each other and with me about issues of concern to them. I'm deeply grateful to those 80-some-odd people who took part and shared their views, which, by the way, you can find on my Web site, www.tedmcmeekin.com, for anybody who wants to check those. They're a bit rough and raw in places, like the MPP who represents that area, but it would be a good opportunity for anyone who wants to read that to see exactly what real people said. They've asked me to communicate their concerns in the context of this budget.

So here's a summary of some of the discussion that I think the government members opposite might find helpful.

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In the area of health care, universal access to health care is a universal concern. Medical care is seen to be facing a "death of a thousand cuts." The growth of two-tier health care should be resisted. Some fear that

NAFTA will ultimately force us into opening the door to American-style health care, which they believe will lower quality and raise costs. Profit, they note, is money taken away from providing quality health care, an interesting point, given some of the discussions we've had about the private-public sector debate.

Along with calls for greater transparency and accountability—a common theme—there was significant support for increased funding in areas such as hospice and community-based care, health education and prevention programs. "We are willing to pay for a strong health care system," virtually everybody seemed to be saying.

In particular, home and community-based care are seen as being able to provide not only the kind of service that people want, but that care and service at some considerable savings to the taxpayers of Ontario. One participant summarized a great deal of the discussion quite neatly with the comment that the "whole thrust of Queen's Park is to divert the sick from home care to long-term care. This must cost much more," she suggested. I can tell you, it does. It's about \$812 a day in the hospital, about \$117 a day in a good long-term-care facility, and in the PC study of detailed home care costs, about \$44 a day. You've got 23% of the people in the four acute care hospitals, which you're continuing to fund with even more dollars, with virtually no money at all going into home care. These 23% of the people shouldn't be there; they should be in home care facilities.

On the education front, the level of frustration with government policies just came boiling off the page; in fact, 10 full pages of notes from this forum, with a whole bunch of suggestions that we could commend to the government. Underfunding, of course, topped the list of specific concerns. It was noted that the funding model is centrally controlled, in itself a major flaw, and that local control needs somehow to be reasserted back into communities, or at least a portion of that control. Specific areas of underfunding included English as a second language, for which we didn't see a lot of money in this budget, and certainly special-needs programs, which is tragic. We heard about children with autism today and we know about the long lineups for assessment—a tragic waste of human potential. Of course, we had the talk about textbooks and the lack of textbooks and all the anger with respect to the funding for the independent schools situation.

On the environment, we had a broad-based discussion. There was a lot of concern about water quality, particularly the need to provide funding for small local municipalities that don't have the assessment base that others might have in order to pick up costs, and the need for partnership there, some real power sharing and some real revenue sharing. There's a lot of talk about new deals for cities, but I see that once again this government has sloughed that off, and rather than pointing direction has decided to point fingers at the feds, even though constitutionally they know, as does anybody who follows that scene, that it's more decidedly a provincial issue.

On the amalgamation issue—talk about accountability—there was strong support for organizing a de-

amalgamation referendum in 2003. Amalgamation, for the participants in these groups, represented "sadness for our loss of identity," a victory of urban interests over rural life, a betrayal by this government of democracy and, in practical terms, a straightforward policy failure. They note some of the changes.

In the transportation area, and the former minister might be interested in this, much discussion can be summed up this way: fewer trucks, more rail; fewer one-person cars, more public transit. There was very little support for the concept of a mid-peninsula expressway. "If you want to solve gridlock," said one participant, "do not build more highways." There was consistent support for better planning regionally from Niagara to Toronto. Such planning, participants thought, should promote a reliance on walking and cycling—what you might call an environmental kind of thrust to some of the budget considerations.

In the minute or so that I have left, I would just add some comments that have been really festering in my riding to do with the agricultural sector. Somebody once said farmers have more things to fix and less to fix them

with than anybody. I think that's an old Perth country saw.

Mike's fishing buddy, Mr Bush—you remember Mike over here—has now introduced the highest level of agricultural protectionism in the world: \$190 billion over the next 10 years. The fear of many in my riding is that whole generation of those hard-working, honest, food-growing folk who have contributed so much to Canada now stands the potential of being lost. There's next to mention in this budget about the importance of the agricultural sector or about the federal funding and the challenge to the provincial government to come up with 40%. That's even before we get into the \$192 million that Agricorp has been sitting on and the dumping of foreign folk who have the advantage of this subsidy.

So from the people to the government, some very practical suggestions about what you ought to be doing with your budget.

The Deputy Speaker: It being almost 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2127.

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rice-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac-	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC)
ulington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)	Lennox and Addington	Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
ambridge	Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Huron-Bruce	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
hatham-Kent Essex	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)		Gerretsen, John (L)
avenport	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	
on Valley East / -Est	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
on Valley West / -Ouest	Caplan, David (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC)
ufferin-Peel-	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
'ellington-Grey	Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
urham	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)
Clinton-Lawrence	Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales		Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Igin-Middlesex-London	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)
rie-Lincoln	Colle, Mike (L)		Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
ssex	Peters, Steve (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)
tobicoke Centre / -Centre	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC)		Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
tabicoke North / -Nord	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
tabicoke-Lakeshore	Crozier, Bruce (L)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
lengarry-Prescott-Russell	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)
	Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
	Hastings, John (PC)		
	Kells, Morley (PC)		
	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires citoyennes, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs, chief government whip, deputy House leader / ministre associé des Affaires francophones, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord des Mines
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
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Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)		
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premiers et derniers numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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